BIBLE DOCTRINES

for Today

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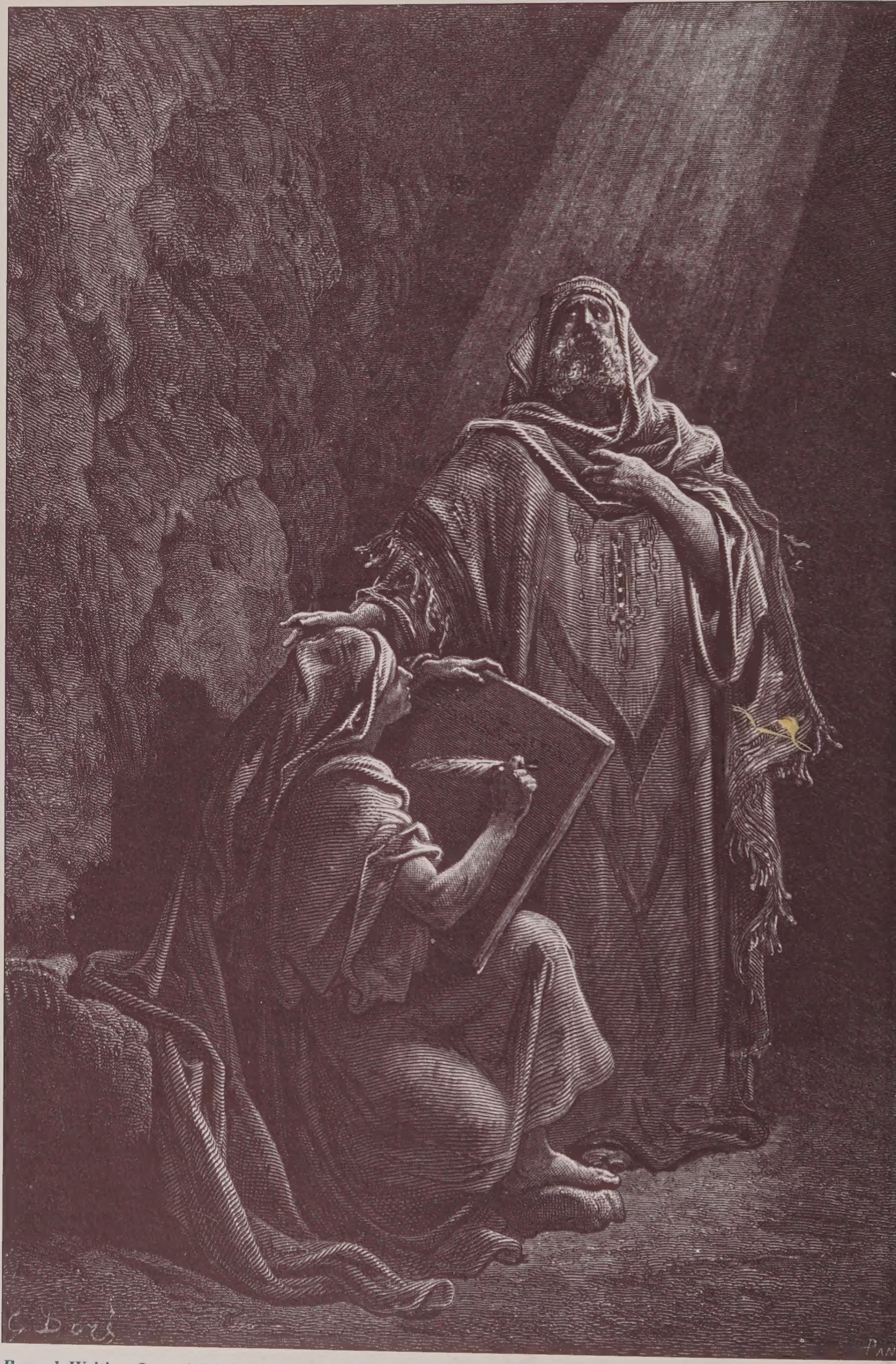

Baruch Writing Jeremiah's Prophecies **by Gustave Doré**

". . . Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him."

Jer. 36:4

BIBLE DOCTRINES
for Today

by

Michael C. Bere

Edited by: Beka Horton

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PART 1

Bibliology: The Doctrine of the Bible
Theology: The Doctrine of God
Christology: The Doctrine of Christ
Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

PART 2

Anthropology: The Doctrine of Man
Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation
Ecclesiology: The Doctrine of the Church
Angelology: The Doctrine of Angels
Eschatology: The Doctrine of Last Things

BIBLE DOCTRINES for Today
Michael C. Bere, Ph.D.
Second Edition

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Correlated Materials
Teacher Guide (with review questions)
Tests/Quizzes and Teacher Key

Staff Credits
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Verses to Memorize

	WEEKS	VERSES	CORRESPONDING DOCTRINE
PART 1	1–3	Rom. 10:9–13 91	Introduction
		2 Tim. 3:16–17 100	Bibliology
		Ps. 119:89; Isa. 40:8 100	Bibliology
	4–6	2 Pet. 1:20–21 100	Bibliology
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		Isa. 55:8–11 85	Theology
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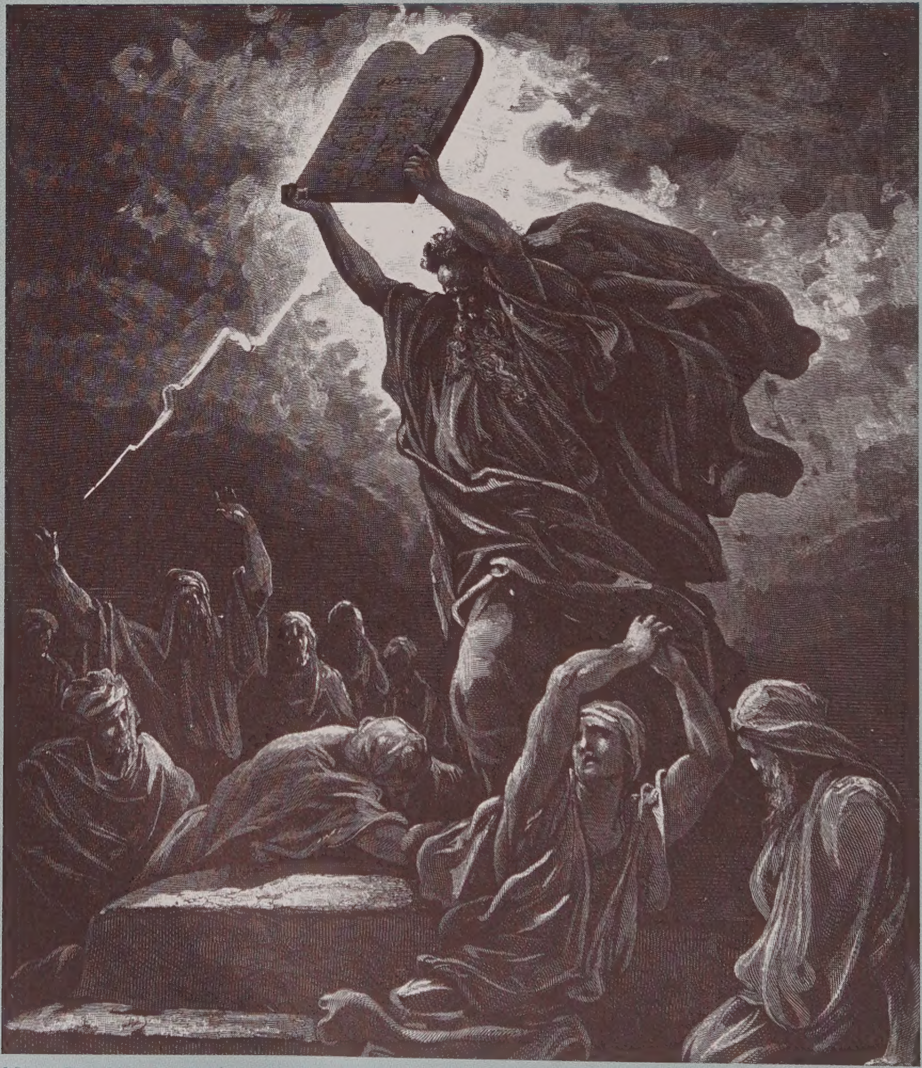
		Ps. 90:1–2	Theology
		Review and nine-weeks verses exam	
	10–12	Ps. 139:1, 2, 6, 7 96	Theology
		Isa. 40:28–31 97	Theology
		Phil. 2:5–8 96.1	Christology
	13–15	Col. 1:16–17; 2:9–10 86.5	Christology
		Isa. 53:1–3 97.6	Christology
		Isa. 53:4–6 98.5	Christology
	16–18	Eph. 5:17–19 100	Pneumatology
		Review and semester verses exam	
PART 2	19–21	1 Cor. 2:2, 5, 14 100	Anthropology
		Rom. 6:6, 11, 13 95.5	Anthropology
		2 Pet. 1:8–11 96	Soteriology
	22–24	Prov. 9:8–10* 100	Practical
		Prov. 27:1; 28:13, 23 98	Practical
		Prov. 15:5–10 95	Practical
	25–27	Prov. 4:23; 6:23 100	Practical
		Eph. 5:25–27	Ecclesiology
		Review and nine-weeks verses exam	
	28–30	Prov. 10:4–6, 19	Practical
		1 John 4:1–3	Angelology
		1 John 4:4–6	Angelology
	31–33	1 Thess. 4:13–15	Eschatology
		1 Thess. 4:16–18	Eschatology
		Prov. 13:24; 22:6	Practical
	34–36	Prov. 23:13–14	Practical
		Review and semester verses exam	

*Several verses from Proverbs are memorized throughout Part 2 to teach the practical result of the study of Bible doctrines.

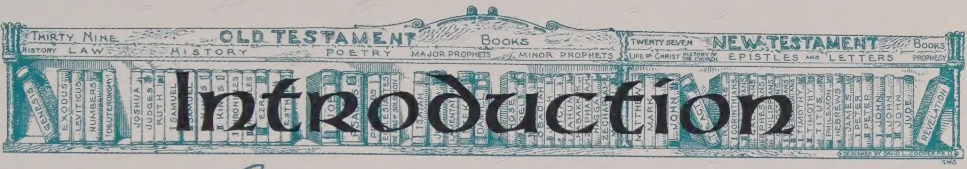
Today man sees all his hopes and aspirations crumbling before him. He is perplexed and knows not whither he is drifting. But he must realize that the Bible is his refuge, and the rallying point for all humanity. It is here man will find the solution of his present difficulties and guidance for his future action, and unless he accepts with clear conscience the Bible and its great message, he cannot hope for salvation. For my part, I glory in the Bible.

—*Haile Selassie I* (1891–1975)
Emperor of Ethiopia



Moses Breaking the Tables of the Law **by Gustave Doré**

"And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." *Exod. 32:19*


THIRTY NINE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS
HISTORY LAW HISTORY POETRY MAJOR PROPHETS MINOR PROPHETS
TWENTY SEVEN NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS
LIFE OF CHRIST HISTORY OF THE CHURCH EPISTLES AND LETTERS PROPHECY
GENESIS EXODUS LEVITICUS NUMBERS DEUTERONOMY JOSHUA JUDGES RUTH I SAMUEL II SAMUEL
MATTHEW MARK JOHN
I TIMOTHY II TIMOTHY TITUS PHILEMON HEBREWS JAMES I PETER II PETER I JOHN II JOHN III JOHN JUDE REVELATION
DESIGNED BY DAVID L. COOPER PH.D.

Introduction

Lesson 1

Why Study Bible Doctrines?

Doctrine means "teaching." The doctrines of the Bible are God's teachings or lessons for mankind. Bible doctrines are the teachings found in God's Word that reveal God, the Creator of all things, and His relationship to His creation. The study of Bible doctrines is the attempt to organize the different aspects of God's revelation into component parts (e.g., God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, man, salvation, the church, etc.).

A. It is important that we know Bible doctrines because God wrote the Bible.

1. God is the **Author** of the Bible.

> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."* 2 Tim. 3:16

The Bible is the only book on earth written by God. We have the guarantee that "the word of our God shall stand forever" (Isa. 40:8).

The Bible consists of two sections: the ***Old Testament,*** consisting of 39 books, and the ***New Testament,*** consisting of 27 books. Since God inspired about 40 writers over the course of 1,500 years, He must have felt it to be very important for mankind to have His written Word.

2. God is the **Subject** of the Bible.

Nature can give us only an incomplete picture of God. It is only through God's Word that we can understand God's character. When people say, "I just can't believe in a God who would . . . ," they are showing their ignorance of God's character. They most likely are not able students of God's Word.

Paul's inspired prayer in Philippians 3:10 was, "That I may know him." Simon Peter knew that the answer to difficult problems comes by growing "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). We can **know** God only through His Word.

B. God says it is very important that we know Biblical doctrines.

In Paul's final two epistles God continually emphasizes the importance of the study of God's Word. Paul wanted Timothy to understand that because "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" it is all, therefore, "profitable for doctrine" (2 Tim. 3:16).

> *"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned . . . the holy scriptures."* 2 Tim. 3:14–15
>
> *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."* 2 Tim. 2:15
>
> *"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."* 1 Tim. 4:15
>
> *"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."* 1 Tim. 4:13
>
> *"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine."* 1 Tim. 4:16

Notice the imperative verbs in the verses above. God has clearly commanded us to study His Word "that the man of God may be perfect [mature], throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17). The study of the Word of God is not optional for the Christian.

The Bible indicates that a Christian shows his love for God by keeping His commandments (John 14:15, 21, 23, 24; 15:10, 14; 1 John 5:2–3; and 2 John 6). In Old Testament times the terms "love" and "obedience" were so closely related as to be indistinguishable. A king might say, "This servant **loves** me" when that servant had obeyed the king's command. Does not our Eternal King deserve that same love? One cannot say, "I love God," and refuse to keep His commandments. Nor can one say, "I love God," and refuse to study His precious Word.

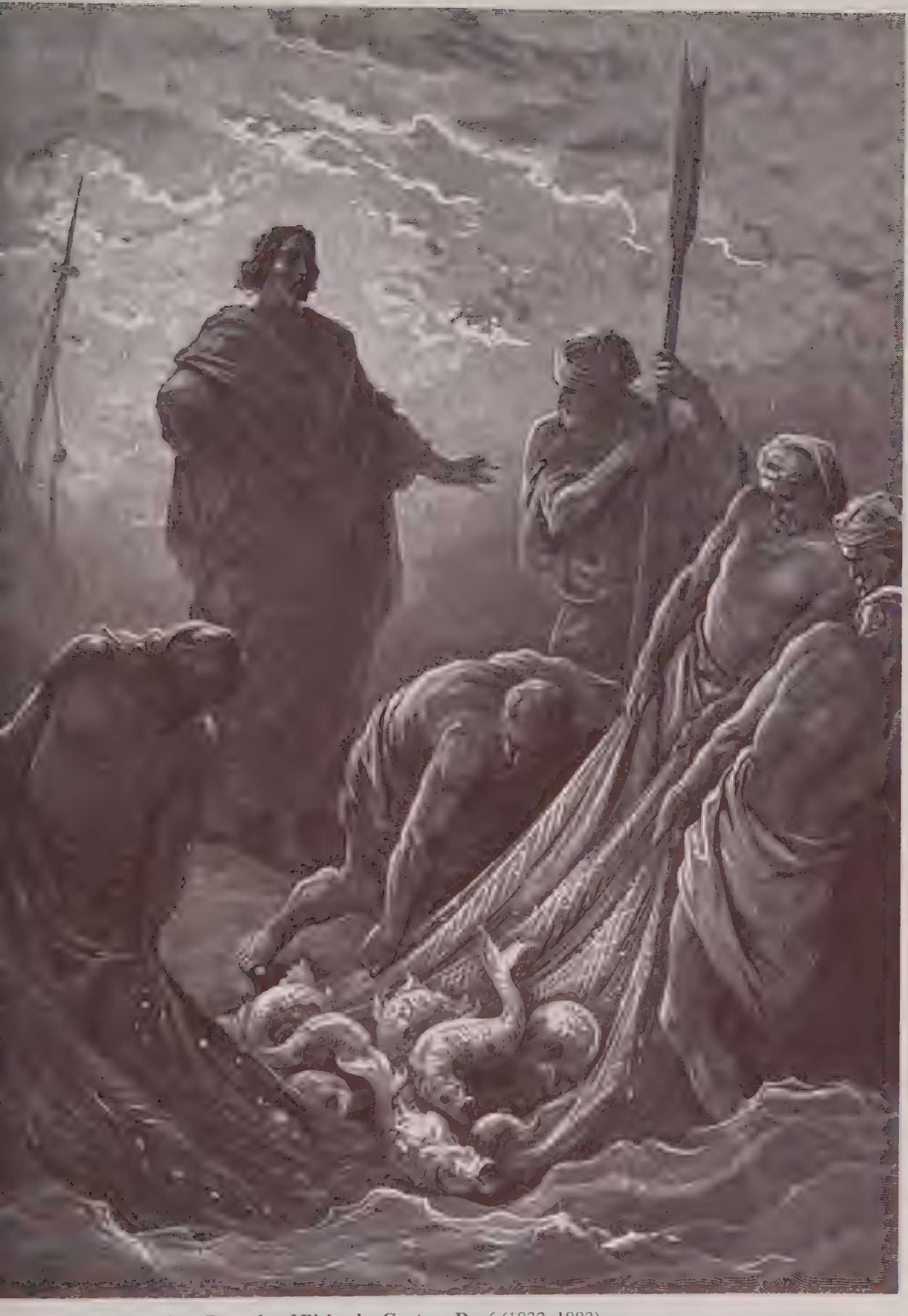
> *"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."* Jer. 15:16

There is a strong connection between loving God and reading His Word. The Christian can daily show his love for God by obeying God's command to study His Word.

C. Bible Doctrines clarify for us what we believe and why. 1 Pet. 3:15

As a young person grows up, it is right for him to obey his authorities without question. This is one of the marks of outstanding Bible characters. Abraham "obeyed; and he went out" of Ur of the Chaldees, "not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). But there must also come a time when we are able to "give a reason" for what we believe. It is not enough to say, "My teacher [pastor, parent, etc.] believes that, but I don't know why." It is important to be able to give a reason for what one believes.

A good balance is illustrated by Simon Peter. Although Christ's request to let down the net seemed irrational, Peter replied, "Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing, nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5). We must know His Word before we can fully understand His Ways.



The Miraculous Draught of Fishes **by Gustave Doré** (1832–1883)
"And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find, They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." *John 21.6*

D. It is important that we know what *not* to believe. 1 John 4:1–6

One of the great dangers of our day is the rise of hundreds of cults. Many of these cults base some of their teaching on a few selected verses from the Word of God. If a Christian is not well-founded on the doctrines of the Bible, he is easy prey for false teaching. Could you explain why you believe the Bible does not teach that someday we will become gods? Could you Scripturally prove that Jesus Christ is God, not just "a god"? Do you believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth one day? A study of the key doctrines of the Bible will help you discern between "the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

E. It is important that we know how to tell someone else about our faith in Christ. 1 Tim. 4:15

One of the "good works" of 2 Timothy 3:17 is effectively telling others what Christ has done for you in salvation. The more you witness, the more you realize how important it is to know your Bible. It is embarrassing not to know where to find important verses. Yet if you study His Word, you will be a "workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

It is the Bible, not arguments, that God honors in our efforts at leading people to Christ. God's promise is that His "word . . . shall not return unto [Him] void, but it shall accomplish that which [He pleases], and it shall prosper in the thing whereto [He] sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

> *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* Heb. 4:12

F. It is important that we appreciate our spiritual blessings.

> *"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God."* 1 Cor. 2:12
>
> *"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."* Eph. 1:18

Many Christians do not fully appreciate all that God has done for them because they fail to read His Word. They live defeated lives because they have never learned all that they have in Christ. They are like the woman who wallpapered a room with retirement checks because she never bothered to read what was written on the face of that monthly piece of mail. Paul tells us to study the Bible so we will know "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

BIBLE DOCTRINES CAN BE DIVIDED INTO 9 CATEGORIES.

I. Bibliology: THE DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE

A. Revelation and Inspiration
B. Authenticity of the Scriptures
C. Credibility of the Scriptures
D. Canonicity of the Scriptures

II. Theology: THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

A. The Being and Attributes of God
B. The Arguments for His Existence
C. His Trinitarian Existence
D. His Works of Creation and Providence

III. Christology: THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

A. Christ's Theanthropic Person (fully God, fully man)
B. His Deity
C. His Humanity
D. The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ
E. Historical Views of the Person of Christ

IV. Pneumatology: THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. His Divine Personality
B. His Work in Salvation

V. Anthropology: THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

A. Anthropology Proper
    1. Origin and Nature of Man
    2. His Primitive State
    3. His Probation and Fall
    4. Actual Transgression
    5. Free Gift of Righteousness or Grace

(continued)

- **B.** Hamartiology or the Doctrine of Sin
  - **1.** Original Sin
  - **2.** Effects of Original Sin
  - **3.** Nature and Character of Guilt and Penalty

VI. Soteriology: THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

- **A.** Objective Soteriology, or the work of Christ in atoning for sin
  - **1.** Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King
  - **2.** Vicarious Atonement
  - **3.** Various Theories of the Atonement
- **B.** Subjective Soteriology, or the Application of the Work of Christ to the individual by the Holy Spirit
  - **1.** Vocation or Call
  - **2.** Repentance and Saving Faith
  - **3.** Justification and Regeneration
  - **4.** Sanctification

VII. Ecclesiology: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

- **A.** The Idea or Nature of the Church
- **B.** The Organization of the Church
- **C.** The Ordinances of the Church
- **D.** The Mission of the Church

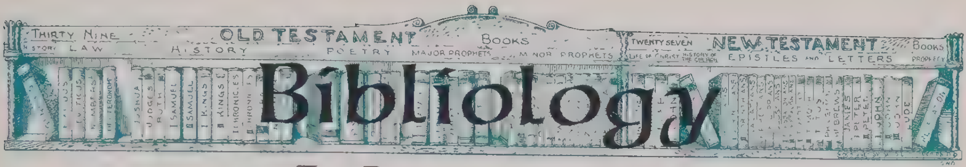
VIII. Angelology: THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

- **A.** Reality, Personality, and Classification of Angels
- **B.** Reality, Origin, Fall, and Methodology of Satan
- **C.** Reality, Origin, and Methodology of Demons

IX. Eschatology: THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

- **A.** The Intermediate and Final State
- **B.** Second Advent of Christ
- **C.** The Resurrections
- **D.** The Final Judgment

CHAPTER 1


THIRTY NINE
OLD TESTAMENT
BOOKS
HISTORY
LAW
HISTORY
POETRY
MAJOR PROPHETS
MINOR PROPHETS
TWENTY SEVEN
NEW TESTAMENT
BOOKS
LIFE OF CHRIST
HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
EPISTLES AND LETTERS
PROPHECY

Bibliology

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE

Lesson

2 Who Wrote the Bible?

We believe in the **plenary verbal inspiration** of the Bible. This lesson will teach what is meant by that vitally important phrase and will show how the Bible is unique among books.

A. What is plenary verbal inspiration?

1. **Inspiration:** The Bible is *God-breathed.*

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. 3:16

a. What inspiration is

The word *inspiration* in 2 Timothy 3:16 is translated from a compound Greek word which means "God-breathed." Thus, this verse says that "all Scripture is God-breathed." God breathed out His words over a period of about 1,500 years to approximately forty specially chosen and prepared men of God who wrote them down to give us our Scriptures, the Word of God. Just as a musician breathes into a trumpet to produce the notes he wants, so God breathed into forty chosen writers of the books of the Bible the exact words that He wanted preserved for all mankind.

The Bible is clear in revealing that God is the Author of the Bible:

> *"The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it."* Ps. 68:11
>
> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God."* 2 Tim. 3:16
>
> *"GOD . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets."* Heb. 1:1
>
> *"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."* 1 Cor. 2:13
>
> *"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."* Gal. 1:11–12

In 2 Peter 1:16–21, Simon Peter makes an amazing claim. He refers to the Transfiguration, at which he was an eyewitness to the

Lord's glory and heard God speak audibly from Heaven. But he declared that the inspiration of God was ***more reliable*** ("a more sure word of prophecy") than actually seeing Christ's glory and hearing God's declaration "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Eyewitnesses may disagree as to exactly what was seen, and even the best of minds would find it difficult to quote someone else verbatim. Inspiration is superior to eyewitness accounts because it is not influenced by fallible man. There can be no doubt that **God breathed out** the words of His wonderful Message to mankind.

> *"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* 2 Pet. 1:16–21

b. What inspiration is not

As used today, the English word *inspiration* has a variety of meanings. Because of this, we may fail to get an accurate picture of the Biblical definition of *inspiration*. We sometimes use the word to refer to an athlete who is "inspired" to play above his ability because of a certain spectator in the stands. This is not what the Biblical term means, however. The ability of Handel to completely write out the score for his *Messiah* in less than one month's time is phenomenal, but it is not "inspiration" in the Biblical sense. The music of Handel was not "God-breathed." The inspiration of the Bible was a ***unique*** act of the Holy Spirit and cannot be duplicated by man.

2. **Verbal inspiration:** The *Words* of the Bible are God-breathed.

> "This [Bible] is the writing of the living God: each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips; each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit." —*C. H. Spurgeon*

The word *verbal* means "by means of words," or "word for word." As used of inspiration, it means the ***very words*** of the Bible were breathed out by God. It is important to understand that this is exactly the claim the Bible makes for itself. Young people, on occasion, enjoy discussing what God could have done. But the study of Bible doctrine is not based on hypothetical situations but on the clear revelation of God's Word. This is especially important in the study of plenary verbal inspiration. It is important to understand what God did do, not to conjecture as to what He could do. The Scripture reveals unquestionably that **God gave the exact words of Scripture.**

> *"The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."* 2 Sam. 23:2
>
> *"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but [in the words] which the Holy Ghost teacheth."* 1 Cor. 2:13
>
> *"All scripture [writing] is given by inspiration of God."* 2 Tim. 3:16
>
> *"this scripture [writing] . . . which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake."* Acts 1:16

The word translated *scripture* (graphē) in 2 Timothy 3:16 and Acts 1:16 means the actual **writings** of God's Word. These writings can consist of nothing else than the words actually written down by the human writer on his manuscript. God dictated to the human writers the actual words that appeared on those original manuscripts, the "graphē" (writings) themselves.

God reveals that not only the spelling of words but also the difference between the singular and plural form of a word is ***God-breathed.***

SPELLING

> *"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."* Matt. 5:18

A "jot" is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and a "tittle" is the small appendage that differentiates between two similar-looking letters in the alphabet.

SINGULAR AND PLURAL

> *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."* Gal. 3:16

Liberals attempt to discredit the Scriptural claim of verbal inspiration by suggesting it would make the human writers of Scripture mere automatons. They want to minimize God's part and emphasize man's part by ridiculing the concept that "each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit." But how else could God breathe out the very words of Scripture than by dictating them to the human writers? The word *dictate* means "to speak so another may write down." This is exactly what God said He did to bring about His Word: "this scripture . . . which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake" (Acts 1:16).

Aleph	*Beth*	*Gimel*	*Daleth*	*He*	*Vav*	*Zayin*	*Heth*	*Teth*	*Yod/jot*	*Kaph*
א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ
Lamed	*Mem*	*Nun*	*Samekh*	*Ayin*	*Peh*	*Tsadi*	*Koph*	*Resh*	*Sin*	*Tav*
ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ת

Biblical Hebrew

> *"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."* Matt. 5:18

Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament Scriptures, is one of the world's oldest living languages. Like Arabic, Hebrew is a Semitic language, a language of the descendants of Noah's son Shem. It was the Semites who invented the alphabet, thus making possible the writing of a Book that people of all classes could read.

Much of Biblical Hebrew was the result of a journey, Abraham's journey from Ur of the Chaldees through Haran to Palestine. Along the way, Abraham encountered dozens of ancient Semitic languages and thus was able to add to his vocabulary as he traveled. He then passed on this expanded language to his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob, and thus it became the language of the Jewish people. Thus as God inspired Moses and other Jews to write the Old Testament, they used many words that were transliterated directly from other Semitic languages. In this marvelous way the Biblical Hebrew language itself confirms the historicity of the Genesis account of Abraham's travels.

The Hebrew language consists of 22 consonants. Unlike the English language, Hebrew is read from right to left and from "back to front." Genesis, for example, would be found at what we would consider the "back" of the Hebrew Bible. The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is **Aleph,** and the last letter is **Tav.**

A "jot" is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet (Hebrew, "yod"). A "tittle" is the small appendage that differentiates two similar-looking letters in the Hebrew alphabet. In the writing of the following pairs of Hebrew consonants, the only distinguishing characteristic is the tittle.

Hebrew Consonant	Name	Transliteration
1. ר 2. ד —tittle	Resh (rāsh) Daleth (dä′lĕth)	**r** **d**
1. ה 2. ח —tittle	He (hā) Heth (kāth)	**h** **k**

Great Bible scholars such as John Calvin, Benjamin Warfield, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Louis Gaussen, John R. Rice, Robert Preus, A. J. Gordon, and others have used the word ***dictation*** in referring to the word-for-word inspiration of the Scriptures.

> "The Holy Spirit actually supplied, inspired, and dictated the very words and each and every term individually." *—Robert Preus*

> "Each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit." *—C. H. Spurgeon*

John Calvin

> "The Law and the Prophets are not a doctrine delivered according to the will and pleasure of men, but dictated by the Holy Spirit." *—John Calvin*

> "He [Paul] wrote this [2 Tim. 3:16] by the dictation of the Holy Spirit." *—Abraham Calov*

Liberals, and those they have influenced, have ridiculed the concept of verbal dictation, sneeringly calling it "mechanical dictation," as if the human writers became robots. A secretary never becomes a robot when she takes dictation from her boss. She remains a human being with all of her faculties and personality. Similarly, the human writers of Scripture did not become robots or mechanical men when God breathed out to them the words of the Scriptures.

> "Their intellectual faculties were at the time directed, not suspended. They knew, they felt, they willed, they recollected, they understood, they approved." *—Louis Gaussen*

Many great Bible scholars (Francis Pieper, R. Laird Harris, Edward J. Young, Gresham Machen, Theodore Engelder, *et al.*) who believe that God dictated the words of Scripture have pointed out very clearly that there was nothing mechanical about God's dictation of the Scriptures and that the liberal phrase "**mechanical** dictation" is misleading. "Mechanical dictation" is a phrase invented by liberals to sneer at those who believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and liberals and those influenced by them have done much damage by repeating the phrase.

3. **Plenary** verbal inspiration: *Every* word of the Bible is God-breathed.

   The word *plenary* means "full." In referring to inspiration it means that the "full" Bible is inspired, or that every word is breathed out by God. This is the claim of the Bible for itself. The historical parts of the Bible are as accurate as the parts that explain salvation. The verses that deal with science are as infallible as the description of Heaven. This is what the Bible claims and what Christians have always believed.

   > *"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* Matt. 4:4

GREAT BIBLE SCHOLARS BELIEVED IN VERBAL INSPIRATION.

"It has always been a matter of profound surprise to me that anybody should ever question the **verbal inspiration** of the Bible."*—B. H. Carroll*

"Just as far as the thoughts of Scripture relating to any element or topic whatsoever are inspired, the **words** in which those thoughts are expressed must be inspired also. Every element of Scripture, whether doctrine or history, of which God has guaranteed the infallibility, must be infallible in its **verbal** expression."
—Benjamin B. Warfield

"If the **words** were not wholly God's, then their teaching would not be wholly God's." *—J. I. Packer*

"Inspiration does not consist in mere divine guidance and protection against error, but is a divine supplying or divine giving of the **very words** that constitute Scripture."
—Francis Pieper

"Let it be observed, that not the matter of the Scriptures only, but the **very words** in which they are written are of God." *—John Gill*

"That this inspiration should extend to the **very words** seems most natural since the purpose of inspiration is to secure an infallible record of truth. Thoughts and words are so inseparably connected that as a rule a change in words means a change in thought." *—Loraine Boettner*

"Verbal inspiration is at the heart of what inspiration means. The **words** which are written in Scripture are the **words of God** himself."
—Clark H. Pinnock

"Scripture wants us to receive all its words as **words chosen by God** and therefore expressing the thought so perfectly and infallibly as only God can express it." *—Theodore Engelder*

"Since the holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, they evidently wrote not their own words, but **those [words]** which God Himself put into their minds."
—John Theodore Mueller

"It is safe to say that there is no doctrine . . . which has been so widely held through the ages of Church history as that of **verbal inspiration.**"
—R. Laird Harris

"If the **words** godhead, election, redemption, imputation, regeneration, propitiation, sacrifice, atonement, faith, repentance, justification, sanctification, adoption, resurrection, heaven, hell, etc., were not inspired and infallible, then everything essential to Christian faith and life may be only old wives' fables. Without certainty and divine authority in the **words** of Scripture, it is patently impossible to believe in the things, or even to know the will of God, for our salvation." *—M'Intosh*

> *"Every word of God is pure."* Prov. 30:5
>
> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God."* 2 Tim. 3:16

The most important truth of all is that **plenary verbal** inspiration is the correct view of how we got our Bible, because it is **God's view.**

> *"All [plenary] scripture [verbal] is given by inspiration of God [God-breathed]."* 2 Tim. 3:16

B. How is the Bible different from any other book?

1. The Word of God is **eternal.**

By *eternal* we mean "from eternity past to eternity future." The Bible is unique because it did not originate gradually over 1,500 years. It originated in the mind of God from the beginning. Scripture clearly reveals this amazing fact.

> *"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."* Ps. 119:89
>
> *"Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever."* Ps. 119:152
>
> *"Thy word is true from the beginning."* Ps. 119:16
>
> *"But the word of the LORD endureth for ever."* 1 Pet. 1:25

2. The Word of God is the **only book inspired by God.**

God has given us a Bible of 66 books penned by 40 different human writers over a period of 1,500 years. This Bible is the only book on earth that is God-breathed. God has not given more Scripture since He inspired the last apostle, John, to write the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Surely if God spent this much time and effort to reveal Himself to us through His Word, we ought to make our Bible the object of our most intense study and devotion. If some have ***died*** for it, surely we should be willing to ***live*** for it.

Lesson

3

How Did God Write the Bible?

A. The Scriptural view of inspiration

1. God **set apart** a special group of men to write His Word.

> *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* 2 Pet. 1:21

God would not trust His holy Word to unregenerate men. The word *holy* in 2 Peter 1:21 means "sanctified" or "set apart." Before the foundation of the world, God *set apart* a special group of men to write the sixty-six books of our Bible. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the apostle Paul gave testimony to God's preparation of their lives even before they were born.

> *"The LORD hath called me from the womb."* Isa. 49:1
>
> *"Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."* Jer. 1:4–5
>
> *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen."* Gal. 1:15–16

One of the reasons the Scripture was so instantly accepted by God's people was the fact that chosen men of God were the ones used by God to write it. Writings of unregenerate men would not have been considered worthy of the time and effort to read them. Although the forty men were not perfect, they had a deep reverence for God and were considered spiritual leaders of their day. (For a complete list of the writers of Scripture, see lesson 7.)

2. God **prepared** these men, using and transcending their personalities, for the writing of His Word.

These forty men were all different. Some were leaders, some were musicians, some were teachers, and some were preachers. Their backgrounds were different, their language was different, and their occupations were different. They each possessed a vocabulary and a writing style that was prepared by God.

Since God is the Creator of language and the Master of all styles, He could give His Word in the styles of David, Peter, Paul, Jeremiah, and thirty-six other men, and yet God's Word remained God's Word. Just as a trumpet, a trombone, and a sousaphone, if "breathed into" by the same musician, all exhibit unique styles, so the forty writers of Scripture, when inspired by God, exhibited their own personal God-prepared styles when they wrote down the words that God breathed into them.

"The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."
2 Sam. 23:2

A bandmaster picks up a trombone and blows his breath through it, giving a trombone sound; he picks up a trumpet, and his breath in the trumpet gives a trumpet sound; his breath in a French horn gives a French horn sound; his breath in a tuba gives a tuba sound. It is the musician's breath that flows through all the instruments to give the different sounds. So God breathed His Word through the human instruments of David, Peter, Paul, and thirty-seven others. Thus, it is God's Word through David, Peter, and Paul, each part with a different style that was created by God. The forty human writers of the Scriptures were the instruments that God chose and prepared to convey His Word to mankind.

> "And back of that we are to remember that throughout the entire life of the prophet the providential control of God had been preparing him with the particular talents, education and experience which would be needed for the message which he was to give. This providential preparation of the prophets, which gave them the proper spiritual, intellectual and physical background, must, indeed have had its beginning in their remote ancestors. The result was that the right men were brought to the right places at the right times, and wrote the particular books or gave the particular messages which were designed for them. When God wanted to give His people a history of their early beginnings, He prepared a Moses to write it. When He wanted to give them the lofty and worshipful poetry of the psalms, He prepared a David with poetic imagination. And since Christianity in its very nature would demand logical statement, He prepared a Paul, giving him a logical mind and the appropriate religious background which would enable him to set it forth in that manner. In this natural way God so prepared the various writers of Scripture that with the appropriate assistance of His directing and illuminating Spirit they freely and spontaneously wrote what He wished as He wished and when He wished. Thus the prophet was fitted to the message, and the message was suited to the prophet. Thus also the distinctive literary style of each writer was preserved, and each writer did a work which no one else was equipped to do." *—Loraine Boettner,*
> *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*
> (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1937), pp. 40–41.

These men prepared by God had a deep respect for His Word as they wrote it down. They eagerly studied and meditated upon everything they received (Dan. 7:15–16; 9:2–6; 1 Tim. 4:15–16; 2 Pet. 3:15–18). It must have been exciting for them to read for the first time what they had just written, God's Word to man.

3. God inspired these men to write some things they could not have known nor understood.

   In Genesis 1 God described the Creation of the world. He gave that information to mankind through Moses. But neither Moses nor any other human being was an eyewitness to Creation. God breathed into Moses the description of something Moses knew nothing about.

Daniel often admitted that he did not understand what he was writing.

> *"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."* Dan. 12:8–9
>
> "In human affairs, for instance, the man of business dictates his letters to his secretary in his own words in order that they may contain his exact meaning. He does not assume that his secretary will correctly express important delicate and complicated matters which might be given him in general terms. Much less would the Holy Spirit say to His penman, "Write to this effect." The Bible assumes to speak concerning a number of things which are absolutely beyond the reach of man's wisdom—the nature and attributes of God, the origin and purpose of man and of the world, man's fall into sin and his present helpless condition, the plan of redemption including our Lord's substitutionary life and death, the glories of heaven, and the torments of hell. More than a general supervision is necessary if the truth concerning these great and sublime subjects is to be given without error and without prejudice. **Inerrancy requires that God shall choose His own words.**"
>
> —*Loraine Boettner,*
> *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*
> (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1937), pp. 13–14.
>
> "Should we see a student who, having taken down the lecture of a profound philosopher, was now studying diligently to comprehend the sense of the discourse which he had written, we should understand simply that he was a pupil and not a master; that he had nothing to do with originating either the thoughts or the words of the lecture, but was rather a disciple whose province it was to understand what he had transcribed, and so be able to communicate it to others. And who can deny that this is the exact picture of what we have in the following passage from Scripture: 'Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: *Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;* Unto whom it was revealed,' etc. (1 Peter 1:10, 11). Here were inspired writers, studying the meaning of what they themselves had written. If they were prophets on the manward side, they were evidently pupils on the Godward side. With all possible allowance for the human peculiarities of the writers, they must have been reporters of what they heard, rather than the formulators of that which they had been made to understand. How nearly this also describes the attitude of Christ,—a hearer that He might be a teacher: 'All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you' (John 15:15); a reporter that He might be a revealer: 'I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me' (John 17:8).
>
> "In these days scholars are very jealous for the human element in inspiration; but the sovereign element is what most impresses the diligent student of this subject."
>
> —*A. J. Gordon,*
> *The Ministry of the Spirit*
> (Philadelphia: Judson, 1949), pp. 173–175.

4. God inspired these men to write about some things of which they had been eyewitnesses.

   > *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us.”*
   > 1 John 1:1–3

   The writers of Scripture were normal human beings. In the course of their lives they observed many things, some of which they wrote down in the words that God breathed into them.

5. God makes it clear that being an eyewitness is not sufficient. He had Dr. Luke state that the uninspired accounts of many eyewitnesses of the life of Christ needed correction:

   > *“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first [from above], to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”* Luke 1:1–4

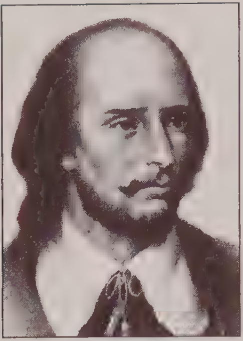
   In the original the Greek language is very specific. Although many had attempted “to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us” their writings were inferior. They were not “perfect,” nor could they give “certainty.” It was only because Luke had perfect understanding ***from God*** (“from above”) that he could write an infallible book. This was true also of Matthew, Mark, and John; even though they, like the men Luke mentions, were eyewitnesses, their perfect understanding came not from their senses but from above.

6. God inspired the men to write about things that human nature would normally ignore or minimize.

   The Bible is unique because it presents men as they really are: sinners in need of salvation. Although man talks of the “little white lie,” God killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit. Uzzah lost his life because he minimized the importance of God’s command not to touch the ark of the covenant. The Bible does not ignore Moses’ anger, David’s sin of adultery, or Peter’s denial of his Lord. It reveals the heart of man to the world so all can see that there is no hope of salvation apart from Jesus Christ. Because “man’s thoughts are not God’s thoughts” (Isa. 55:8–9), human beings left to themselves could never have written a book so revealing of human nature.

   > “The Bible is not such a book as man would write if he could, or could write if he would.” *—Lewis Chafer*

B. Four non-Scriptural views of inspiration



William Shakespeare

Once a man rejects the supernatural aspect of the Bible (liberalism) he leaves a vacuum which he attempts to fill with his own ideas. Four false teachings have arisen that boldly reject the Biblical view of inspiration.

1. False teaching: Natural inspiration

This idea teaches that the writers of the Bible were inspired men who reached high levels of creativity like Shakespeare, Milton, Michelangelo, Bach, and Beethoven. This modernistic idea is an incorrect use of the word translated *inspiration* (God-breathed). God did not breathe the words of Shakespeare or the music of Bach! The perpetrators of this teaching are evidently ignorant of the Greek language.

2. False teaching: Partial inspiration

This false teaching claims that the Bible merely "contains" the Word of God. It claims that some of the Bible is inspired, but not all; the Bible may be accurate in morals and doctrine, but it is unreliable in areas of science and history. This falsehood is rejected for the following reasons:

a. The Bible claims that "all scripture [i.e., **every word**] is given by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. 3:16)

One might say that a classroom "contains" people, desks, chairs, etc. But that may also mean it contains other things that are not people, desks, or chairs. If we say that the Bible "contains" the Word of God, then we are implying that it also contains material that is not the Word of God.

b. If the Holy Spirit could inspire ***some*** of the Scripture, why not believe that He could inspire it **all?**

c. This modernistic view ultimately makes man the final authority in determining which passages are inspired and which are not.

Any time a fallible human being becomes the final authority, the perfection of the Bible is in jeopardy. Each man would view the Bible differently, and the result would be chaotic and relativistic. Man's authority would rise above the authority of the Bible. Each individual would have the authority to claim that only his favorite portions were inspired. If a given passage "stepped on his toes," however, he could consider it uninspired.

d. If the Bible is truly God's Word as it claims, then it must be perfect by definition (since the product of a perfect God can be nothing less than perfect).

e. If the Bible is accurate in areas of "major importance," why should it not be accurate also in areas of "minor importance"?

We realize, of course, that all of the Bible is important, but those who use this teaching say that we can only trust it on the issues of eternal life (salvation, sanctification, etc.). But surely the book that is accurate in revealing the way to heaven can also accurately describe the laws of heaven and earth. If we can trust the Bible for our eternal destiny, we can also trust it to be accurate in every area of life and thought.

John Wesley

"The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord,' when it was their own invention.
2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity.
3. Therefore, I draw this conclusion, that **the Bible must be given by divine inspiration.**" —*John Wesley*

3. False teaching: Conceptual inspiration

This unscriptural idea says that God only inspired the thoughts of the Bible and man wrote those thoughts down in his own words. It rejects verbal inspiration, saying it is "too mechanical" to imagine God dictating every word, that man would lose his freedom if such a view were true. This false view is rejected for these reasons:

a. The Bible claims every **word** is inspired. (2 Tim. 3:16)

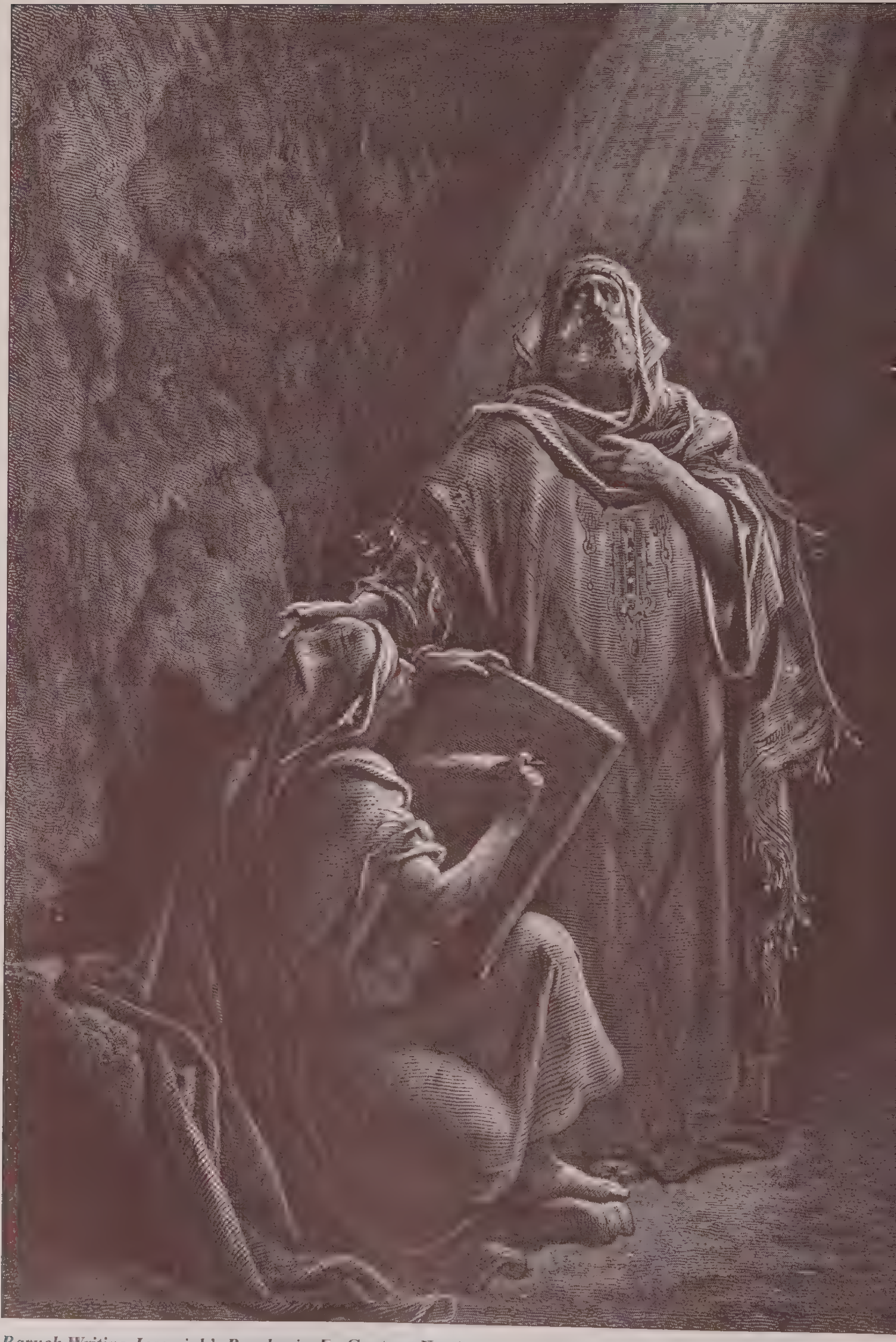
The Greek word for *scripture* in 2 Timothy 3:16 is *graphe* and means "the writings." The idea is that the words that were actually written down by the human authors were given by God to them. Thoughts were not written down, but ***words.***

> *"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but [the words] which the Holy Ghost teacheth."* 1 Cor. 2:13

b. It is impossible to have wordless thoughts.

If the words were not from God, how could we be sure the thoughts were from God? Very slight changes in words or grammar can cause dramatic changes in the thought of a sentence.

c. The writers themselves occasionally did not understand what they were writing.



***Baruch Writing Jeremiah's Prophecies* by Gustave Doré**

". . . And Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book." *Jer. 36:4*

> *"I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this."* Dan. 7:15–16
>
> *"I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it."* Dan. 8:27
>
> *"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."* Dan. 12:8–9
>
> *"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently. . . . Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister."* 1 Pet. 1:10–12

How could the human writers put God's thoughts into their own words if they did not understand what they were writing? God had to dictate to them every word.

4. False teaching: The Bible "becomes" the Word of God

This error, often called the "*encounter theory,*" teaches that the Bible only becomes the Word of God when it speaks to you personally (when you encounter a blessing). We know that the Bible is truth whether it is accepted or not.

> *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."* John 17:17

An individual's disbelief in the law of gravity does not annul the law. A rejection of the principles of mathematics does not change those basic principles. Likewise, the disregard for some portions of God's Word does not change the fact that God's "Word is truth."

> *"Let God be true, but every man a liar."* Rom. 3:4

SUMMARY

All of these false teachings can be rejected with one verse of Scripture: 2 Tim. 3:16.

MAN SAYS:	GOD SAYS: (2 TIM. 3:16)
Parts of the Bible are inspired.	"All scripture is given by inspiration of God."
The **thoughts** are inspired.	"All **scripture** [the **writings**—the **actual words** that were written down] is given by inspiration of God."
Inspiration was **natural.**	"All scripture is **given by inspiration of God** [God-breathed]."
The Bible **becomes** the Word of God when it speaks to the individual.	**"All** scripture . . . is **profitable."**

Lesson

4 The Proofs of Inspiration

A. The Bible claims to be the inspired Word of God.

The Bible is **unique** because it first ***claims*** to be written by God and then ***proves*** its divinity by many infallible proofs.

Some would argue that it is circular reasoning to use the Bible's claim as a proof of its inspiration. They say that *any* book could make such a claim. But the fact is that very few other books have claimed to be written by God Himself. And those which have claimed such either did not stand the test of time or are of obviously inferior quality.

1. There are many **powerful statements of inspiration** in the Scriptures.

> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."* 2 Tim. 3:16
>
> *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* 2 Pet. 1:21
>
> *"The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."* 2 Sam. 23:2
>
> *"the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah"* Ezra 1:1
>
> *"this scripture . . . which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake"* Acts 1:16

In Isaiah 8:19–20 God through Isaiah warns the people to beware of "wizards that peep, and that mutter," saying that if they do not speak according to the Word of God they should be rejected as prophets. God's Word is always the test of the validity of man's message.

2. The phrase **"Thus saith the Lord"** and similar phrases are found over 3,800 times in the Old Testament.

3. The **human writers realized** that **God was giving them the words.**

> *"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, . . . "* Exod. 25:1
>
> *"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken."* Isa. 1:2
>
> *"The words of Jeremiah . . . To whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah."* Jer. 1:1–2

4. The **words of Moses** are **connected** with the **words of Christ.**

> *"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"* John 5:46–47
>
> *"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."* Luke 16:31

5. Christ placed His stamp of approval on the Scriptures.

> *"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* Matt. 4:4

6. The **judgment attached to adding to** or **taking away from** the words of Scripture shows God's attitude toward the importance of His Word.

In three different passages God warns against adding to His Word.

> *"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."* Deut. 12:32
>
> *"Every word of God is pure. . . . Add thou not unto his words."* Prov. 30:5–6
>
> *"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."* Rev. 22:18

It is interesting to note that these warnings occur at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of God's Word.

7. **Very few other books claim to be the Word of God.**

   Those that do (e.g., the Koran and the Book of Mormon) are filled with anachronisms and historical inaccuracies.

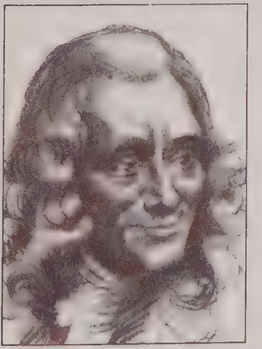
8. We **accept the authorship** of reliable literature **until proven otherwise.**

   We assume every book in the library or bookstore was written by the one whose name appears on the cover. We would never question that unless we knew someone was writing under a pseudonym or we had other good evidence to the contrary. Should we not also accept the Bible's claims of being written by the One it claims to be written by until there is evidence of deceit?

B. History has shown that the Bible is the indestructible Word of God.

Diocletian

The Roman emperor **Diocletian** (A.D. 245–313) decreed in A.D. 303 that every Bible should be destroyed. He had been told that if he could destroy the Bible he would destroy Christianity because "Christians are a people of the Book." Feeling he had succeeded, Diocletian raised a column with the inscription in Latin: *"Extincto nomene Christianorum"* (the name of Christian is extinguished). Yet Constantine succeeded him and in the year A.D. 312 replaced the pagan symbols with the symbol of the cross. This remarkable change took place in less than ten years.



Voltaire

Fourteen hundred years after Constantine, the French atheist **Voltaire** (1694–1778) boasted, "One hundred years from my day there will not be a Bible in the earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity seeker." Twenty years after the death of Voltaire, the Geneva Bible Society purchased his house for printing the Bible. It later became the Paris headquarters for the British and Foreign Bible Society, which stored and distributed Bibles throughout Europe. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40:8).

1. The **indestructibility of the Bible** was **promised.**

   "The word of our God shall stand for ever." Isa. 40:8

   "My word . . . shall not return unto me void." Isa. 55:11

   "My words . . . shall not depart out of thy mouth." Isa. 59:21

   "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." Matt. 5:18

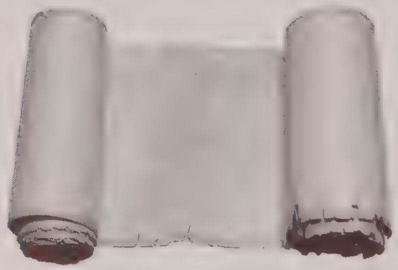
   "My words shall not pass away." Matt. 24:35

   "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke 16:17

2. The **indestructibility of the Bible** was **fulfilled** in the copying of the manuscripts.

   God's promise of indestructibility has been fulfilled through the centuries. Almost as soon as the original manuscripts (sometimes referred to as the Autographs) were written, copies began to be made. Just as a well-loved copy of the Bible soon begins to deteriorate, so the original manuscripts did not last long because of constant handling. But God preserved His Word by the hands of dedicated copyists. These men had such a high regard for Scripture that they went to great lengths to ensure the accuracy of their copies.

THE COPYISTS' CARE



a reproduction of the Isaiah Scroll found in 1947 near the Dead Sea

It was clear from the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 that God's Word had been carefully copied through the centuries. Some of the Old Testament manuscripts discovered dated back to the first century B.C. During that time and before, regulations for the copying of these Biblical manuscripts were passed down orally from generation to generation. When the Jewish oral law was written down (the Talmud—c. A.D. 200), it revealed in documented form the scrupulous care of these copyists of God's Word. Further documentation of this scribal process was confirmed by the Masoretes (măs′ō•rēts), *Hebrew scholars who copied the Hebrew Old Testament from c. A.D. 500 until the invention of the printing press (c. 1440).*

"The same extreme care which was devoted to the transcription of manuscripts is also at the bottom of the disappearance of the earlier copies. When a manuscript had been copied with the exactitude prescribed by the Talmud [book of Jewish law], and had been duly verified, it was accepted as authentic and regarded as being of equal value with any other copy. If all were equally correct, age gave no advantage to a manuscript; on the contrary, age was a positive disadvantage, since a manuscript was liable to become defaced or damaged in the lapse of time. A damaged or imperfect copy was at once condemned as unfit for use. Attached to each synagogue was a "Gheniza," or lumber cupboard, in which defective manuscripts were laid aside; and from these receptacles some of the oldest manuscripts now extant [in existence] have in modern times been recovered. Thus, far from regarding an older copy of the Scriptures as more valuable, the Jewish habit has been to prefer the newer, as being the most perfect and free from damage."

◆

"Extraordinary care was taken to secure perfect accuracy in the transcription of the sacred books. Especially was this the case with the *synagogue rolls,* or copies of the Pentateuch intended for use in the synagogues. These were written on skins, fastened together so as to form a roll, never in modern book form. Minute regulations were laid down in the Talmud for their preparation. 'A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals, prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew. These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals. Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex [manuscript]. The length of each column must not extend over less than forty-eight, or more than sixty lines; and the breadth must consist of thirty letters. The whole copy must be first lined; and if three words be written in it without a line, it is worthless. The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other colour, and be prepared according to a definite receipt [recipe]. An *authentic* copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least to deviate. No word or letter, not even a *yod,* must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him. . . . Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene; between every word the breadth of a narrow consonant; between every new *parshiah,* or section, the breadth of nine consonants; between every book, three lines. The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so. Besides this, the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress, wash his whole body, not begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink, and should a king address him while writing that name he must take no notice of him. . . . The rolls in which these regulations are not observed are condemned to be buried in the ground or burned; or they are banished to the schools, to be used as reading-books.' "

◆

"Besides recording varieties of reading, tradition, or conjecture, the Masoretes [Old Testament copyists—A.D. 500–1400] undertook a number of calculations which do not enter into the ordinary sphere of textual criticism. They numbered the verses, words, and letters of every book. They calculated the middle word and the middle letter of each. They enumerated verses which contained all the letters of the alphabet, or a certain number of them; and so on. These trivialities, as we may rightly consider them, had yet the effect of securing minute attention to the precise transmission of the text; and they are but an excessive manifestation of a respect for the sacred Scriptures which in itself deserves nothing but praise. The Masoretes were indeed anxious that not one jot nor tittle—not one smallest letter nor one tiny part of a letter—of the Law should pass away or be lost." —*Sir Frederick Kenyon, Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), pp. 38–43.

"That the Hebrew text should have been transmitted by copyists through so many centuries is a phenomenon unequalled in the history of literature." —*Robert Dick Wilson*

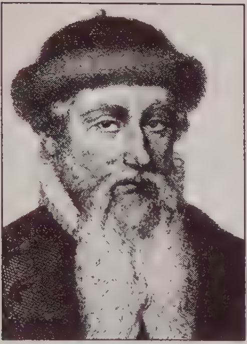
"If we compare the present state of the New Testament text with that of any other ancient writing, we must . . . declare it to be marvelously correct. Such has been the care with which the New Testament has been copied—a care which has doubtless grown out of true reverence for its holy words—such has been the providence of God in preserving for His Church in each and every age a completely exact text of the Scriptures." —*Benjamin B. Warfield*

a collection of Hebrew scrolls

"In an article in the *North American Review*, a writer made some interesting comparisons between the writings of Shakespeare and the Scriptures, which show that much greater care must have been bestowed upon the biblical manuscripts than upon other writings, even when there was so much more opportunity of preserving the correct text by means of printed copies than when all the copies had to be made by hand. He said:

" 'It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript. . . . any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur.' "

—*John Lea,*
The Greatest Book in the World
(Phila., n.p., 1929), p. 15.

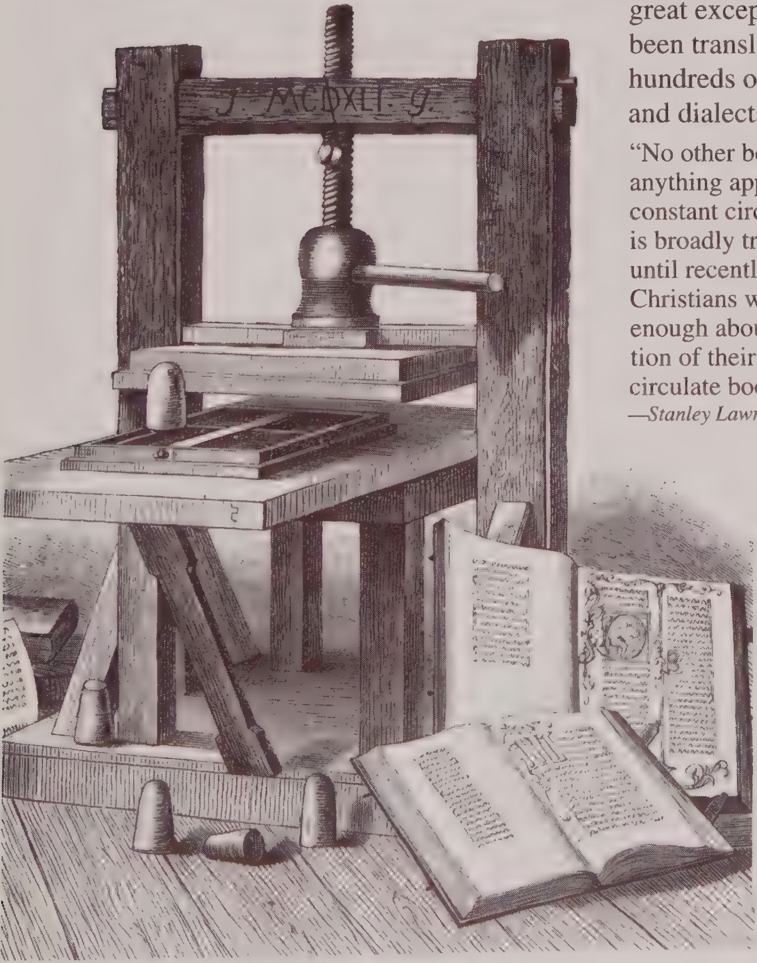


Johann Gutenberg

The faithful copying of God's precious Word continued throughout the Middle Ages. Then by the middle of the 15th century the Biblical text was "locked-in" by the invention of the **movable-type printing press** by Johann **Gutenberg** in Mainz, Germany. In 1456, Gutenberg produced the first printed edition of the Bible (the Latin Vulgate). His great desire was to be able to produce inexpensive Bibles "by a machine which never wearies—to every soul which enters life."

Gutenberg's dream has been realized in the amazing circulation which the Bible enjoys. There is no other book that begins to compare with the circulation of the Bible. It has been read by more people and translated into more languages than any other book. There is a linguistic "rule of thumb" which states that no writing translated into another language will enjoy the same circulation in the translation that it enjoyed in the original. The Bible is the great exception. It has been translated into hundreds of languages and dialects.

> "No other book has known anything approaching this constant circulation, for it is broadly true to say that until recently it is only Christians who have cared enough about the propagation of their beliefs to circulate books."
> —*Stanley Lawrence Greenslade*



Gutenberg's printing press 1441

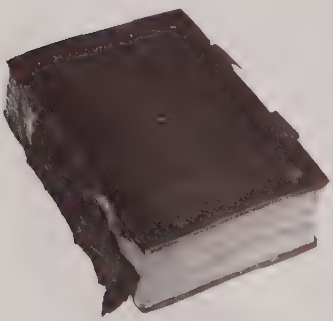
YET IT LIVES

Generation follows generation—yet it lives.
Nations rise and fall—yet it lives.
Kings, dictators, presidents come and go—yet it lives.
Hated, despised, cursed—yet it lives.
Doubted, suspected, criticized—yet it lives.
Condemned by atheists—yet it lives.
Scoffed at by scorners—yet it lives.
Exaggerated by fanatics—yet it lives.
Misconstrued and misstated—yet it lives.
Ranted and raved about—yet it lives.
Its inspiration denied—yet it lives.

Yet it lives—as a lamp to our feet.
Yet it lives—as a light to our path.
Yet it lives—as the gate to heaven.
Yet it lives—as a standard for childhood.
Yet it lives—as a guide for youth.
Yet it lives—as an inspiration for the matured.
Yet it lives—as a comfort for the aged.
Yet it lives—as food for the hungry.
Yet it lives—as water for the thirsty.
Yet it lives—as rest for the weary.
Yet it lives—as light for the heathen.
Yet it lives—as salvation for the sinner.
Yet it lives—as grace for the Christian.

To know it is to love it.
To love it is to accept it.
To accept it means life eternal.

—Author Unknown,
from *Gideon Magazine*



the Geneva Bible

THE ARAMAIC LANGUAGE

*"Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in **Syriack** [Aramaic]."* Dan. 2:4

The Aramaic language derived its name from those who spoke it, the Aramaeans of northeast Palestine and Syria. The Aramaeans never developed into a large empire, but they are well known for giving a language to the world. Because Aram (or Syria) was on the main caravan route between Babylonia and Egypt, and because Aramaic had a simplified alphabetical system of writing (as opposed to the awkward cuneiform system), it became the commercial and diplomatic language of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. It was quite natural, then, for the Hebrew people under the captivities of those two empires (721 B.C.–536 B.C.) to learn the language of business and diplomacy.

As a result, several portions of the Old Testament were originally written in Aramaic (Dan. 2:4–7:28; Ezra 4:8–6:18, 7:12–26; and Jer. 10:11). Daniel, as a president in the Babylonian empire, knew Hebrew and Aramaic fluently. In captivity the Jewish people (Ezra included) learned Aramaic of necessity. Hebrew children born during that time often learned Aramaic, not Hebrew (Neh. 13:24). As a result, when the Jews returned from Babylon it was necessary for Ezra to translate the Hebrew Old Testament into Aramaic so the people could understand it (Neh. 8:1–8). Aramaic continued as the spoken language of the Jews through the time of Christ but quickly fell into disuse by the end of the first century A.D.

Aramaic is a language comparable to Hebrew with differences primarily in vocabulary, form, and grammar. It is referred to in the Old Testament as **Syriac** (because of its origin) and in the New Testament as **Hebrew** (because of its linguistic similarities).

> *"And the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue [Aramaic], and interpreted in the Syrian tongue."* Ezra 4:7
>
> *"And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew [Aramaic], THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."* Luke 23:38
>
> *"And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew [Aramaic] Golgotha."* John 19:17
>
> *"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew [Aramaic] tongue Armageddon."* Rev. 16:16

It is clear from the New Testament that although Greek was becoming the spoken language of the world in the first century, Jesus Christ and the apostles still spoke Aramaic fluently.

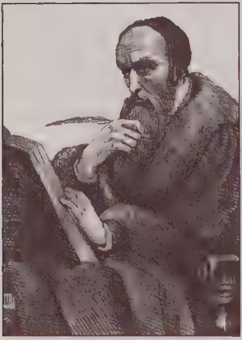
> *"And he [Jesus Christ] took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, **Talitha cumi;** which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise."* Mark 5:41
>
> *"And looking up to heaven, he [Jesus Christ] sighed, and saith unto him, **Ephphatha,** that is, Be opened."* Mark 7:34
>
> *"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* Matt. 27:46
>
> *"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be **Anathema Maranatha.**"* 1 Cor. 16:22
>
> *"But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, **Abba,** Father."* Rom. 8:15
>
> *"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, **Abba,** Father."* Gal. 4:6
>
> *"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew [Aramaic] tongue is **Abaddon,** but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."* Rev. 9:11

BIBLIOLOGY

3. **God has preserved the Bible through the centuries in its translation into many languages.**

As the dedicated copyists preserved God's Word for us in the original languages, so consecrated translators gave the peoples of the world God's Word in their own languages.

As early as the fifth century B.C., Ezra found it necessary to translate the Bible publicly from Hebrew to Aramaic (Neh. 8:1–8). In the first century A.D., Greek translations of the Hebrew Old Testament were available to the apostles as they went on their missionary journeys. It is believed that they were able to refer to these regularly along with their treasured copies of the Hebrew Old Testament. Paul could quote from the Old Testament (Deut. 25:4) and the New Testament (Luke 10:7) in one passage (1 Tim. 5:18) and say confidently, **"The scripture saith."**


John Wycliffe

The desire of John Wycliffe (1320?–1384), an Englishman of the Middle Ages, to see the common person able to read the Bible in English motivated him to complete his translation in 1382. His next effort was to have copies made so that it could be available to those wishing to read it for themselves. One historian writes:

> "The interest taken in the man and in his work, enlisted a hundred expert hands, who, though they toiled to multiply copies, could scarcely supply the many who were eager to buy. Some ordered complete copies to be made for them; others were content with portions; the same copy served several families in many instances, and in a very short time Wicliffe's English Bible had obtained a wide circulation, and brought a new life into many an English home."*

This whole idea of the common person with his own copy of the Scripture was thought to be totally unnecessary (and dangerous) by the Roman priests. The typical response is best summed up in the words of Henry Knighton, who was canon of St. Mary's Abbey in Leicester, England:

> "Christ delivered his Gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might administer to the laity and to weaker persons, according to the state of the times and the wants of men. But this Master John Wicliffe translated it out of Latin into English, and thus laid it more open to the laity, and to women who could read, than it had formerly been to the most learned of the clergy, even to those of them who had the best understanding. And in this way the Gospel pearl is cast abroad, and trodden under foot of swine, and that which was before precious to both clergy and laity is rendered, as it were, the common jest of both. The jewel of the Church is turned into the sport of the people, and what was

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*Quoted material from *John Wicliffe: The Morning Star of the Reformation* (St. Louis, Missouri, Bible Memory Association International, 1972 reprint), pp. 79–83, 104.

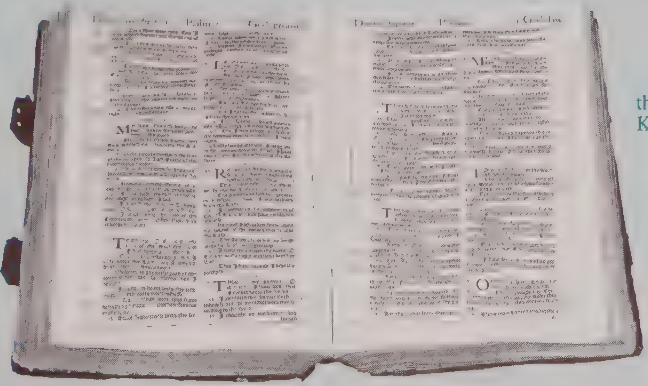
> hitherto the principal gift of the clergy and divines is made for ever common to the laity."

This attitude of the ruling church that the Bible was a Book for priests, not for people, finally resulted in the death of anyone found with a copy of Wycliffe's Bible. Many were killed with their copy of that Bible hanging around their neck. John Wycliffe died before much of the persecution began, but thirty years after his death "his memory was pronounced infamous, and it was decreed that his body and bones should be taken from the ground and thrown away from the burial of any church, according to the canon laws and decrees!"

> "In pursuance of this decree, a few years afterwards his grave . . . was opened, and his remains removed. These were then burnt, and the ashes cast into the adjoining brook named the 'Swift,' and Fuller, describing the scene, quaintly but truly says:
>
> 'This brook conveyed them into Avon, the Avon into the Severn, the Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean; and thus the ashes of Wicliffe were the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over.' " —*Henry Knighton*
>
> *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."*
> Matt. 24:35

THE BIBLE: A WORLD'S RECORD

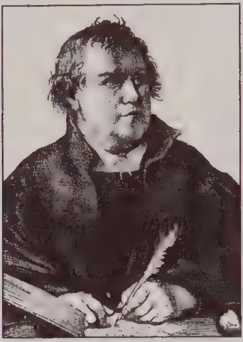
The world's best selling and most widely distributed book is the Bible, which has been translated into 2,009 languages, and portions of it into a further 910 languages. . . . It has been estimated that between 1815 and 1992 some 6.1 billion copies of the Bible were printed, of which 36.97 percent were handled by Bible societies. —*Guinness Book of World Records* (New York: Guinness Publishing Ltd., 1994), p. 154.



the 1611
King James Bible

THE BIBLE AND MODERN LANGUAGES

The translations of God's Word have been used of God to enhance the languages of the world.



Martin Luther

Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German helped shake the world and refine the German language to a high level.

> "The German Bible produced by [Luther] was to become the national book of Germany, the book whereby, for the first time, she was to proclaim her unity. This is extremely interesting when we remember that John Huss achieved a similar result in Czech, and Calvin in French. . . ." *—Frantz Funck-Brentano*

> "Luther created the German language, and he did so by translating the Bible." *—Heinrich Heine*

> "Above all else, Luther gave poetry its language. His German, the German of Luther's Bible, was the fountain at which the German language constantly refreshed itself when it was in danger of losing itself through the influence of a foreign language, Latin or French, or in an artificial literary style." *—Karl Holl*

> "No one who knows the nature of a language dares to appear in the presence of Luther without reverence. Among no people has one man done so much to help create their language." *—Friedrich Klopstock*

The same could be said of the translations that gave us God's Word in the English language. It has been said that it was the English Bible that above all else kept the English language from becoming obsolete down through the centuries.

> "Among the works that have contributed to the formation of modern English an important place must be given to the translations of the Bible, from those of Tindale and Coverdale in the early sixteenth century to the 'Authorized Version' of 1611. The effort to find accurate expression for the thoughts of the sacred writers called forth abundance of ingenuity in the invention of new combinations of words; and the fact that the Bible has for centuries been the most widely read and most frequently quoted of books has made it the most fruitful source of allusive changes of meaning." *—Henry Bradley*

> "The Bible ought to be read, were it only for the sake of the grand English in which it is written, an education in itself." *—Alfred Tennyson*
>
> (more than 400 Biblical references have been found in his poetry)

But we must always remember that these translations were not powerful because of the effectiveness of the language in which they were written.

> "The Englishmen who went to the stake did not die for these cadences. . . . These men were cheerful to die for the **meaning** of the Word and for its **authorship—**because it was spoken by Christ."
>
> *—Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch*

COMMON PHRASES FROM THE BIBLE

One has only to be reminded of the phrases from the Bible which have passed into common speech to realize how much vigor and expressiveness it has added to our language:

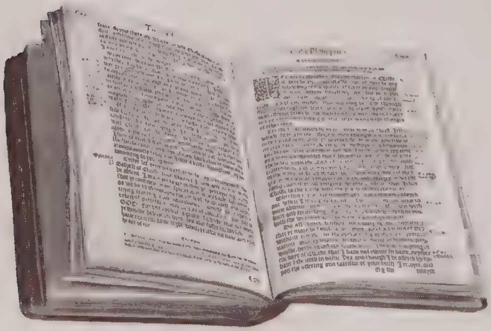
the apple of his eye
cast thy bread upon the waters
a coat of many colors
a good old age
living fountains of waters
the wife of thy bosom
the valley of decision
a still small voice
miserable comforters
the pride of life
from strength to strength
the little foxes that spoil the vines
precept upon precept, line upon line
as a drop in a bucket
the salt of the earth
the burden and heat of the day
the signs of the times
the children of light
the powers that be
the fashion of this world
decently and in order
a thorn in the flesh
a cloud of witnesses
a crown of life
labor of love
hewers of wood and drawers of water
thou art the man
prisoners of hope
lesser light
the handwriting on the wall
faithful unto death
a mess of pottage
the mantle of Elijah
the elder brother
the widow's mite
the highways and hedges
a pearl of great price
clear shining after rain
stand in awe
the day is at hand
joy cometh in the morning
clear as crystal
hip and thigh
we are the people
the fat of the land
the four winds of heaven
the end is not yet
a book of remembrance
the laborer is worthy of his hire
whited sepulchres
righteous overmuch
not gather figs of thistles
to entertain angels unaware
the wings of the morning
tell it not in Gath
all things to all men
a howling wilderness

—*The Influence of the English Bible upon the English Language*
and upon English and American Literature
(New York: American Bible Society, n.d.), p. 5.

The Bible Is—

The charter of all true liberty.
The forerunner of all civilization.
The molder of institutions and governments.
The fashion of law.
The secret of national progress.
The guide of history.
The ornament and mainspring of literature.
The inspiration of philosophies.
The text-book of ethics.
The light of the intellect.
The soul of all strong heart life.
The illuminator of darkness.
The foe of superstition.
The enemy of oppression.
The uprooter of sin.
The comfort in sorrow.
The strength in weakness.
The pathway in perplexity.
The escape from temptation.
The steadier in the day of power.
The embodiment of all lofty ideals.
The begetter of life.
The promise of the future.
The star of death's night.
The revealer of God.
The guide and the hope and the inspiration of man.

—*Bishop Wm. F. Anderson*



the Bible as translated
by William Tyndale

Lesson

5 The Proofs of Inspiration (continued)

We have already seen that the Bible is God's Word because it claims to be and because it has never been destroyed. With each additional proof we begin to realize that the evidence is overwhelming. This lesson will discuss two more proofs of inspiration: the Bible's **fulfilled prophecy** and its **scientific accuracy.**

A. The fulfilled prophecies of the Bible

This topic is inexhaustible; here is a partial listing of Old and New Testament prophecies that have already been fulfilled.

1. There are many **Old Testament prophecies** concerning Christ's first coming.

232

2. Many **New Testament prophecies** are fulfilled by historical events.

PROPHECY	OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCE	NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT
His virgin birth	Isa. 7:14	Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:30–35
His birthplace in Bethlehem	Mic. 5:2	Luke 2:4–7
His forerunner, John the Baptist	Isa. 40:3	John 1:6–8, 19–23
His Triumphal Entry	Zech. 9:9–10	John 12:12–19
His side pierced at Calvary	Zech. 12:10	John 19:34
His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"	Ps. 22:1*	Matt. 27:46
Darkness at His crucifixion	Ps. 22:2	Matt. 27:45
Mocking at His crucifixion	Ps. 22:6–8	Matt. 27:39–43
His hands and feet pierced	Ps. 22:16	John 20:24–29
Casting lots for His vesture	Ps. 22:18	Matt. 27:35
His unbroken bones	Ps. 34:20	John 19:36
Given vinegar to drink	Ps. 69:21	Matt. 27:34, 48
Buried in a rich man's grave near the wicked	Isa. 53:9	Matt. 27:57–60
Christ's Resurrection	Ps. 16:10 Hos. 6:2	Luke 24:1–7
Christ's Ascension	Ps. 110:1 Ps. 24:3–10	Acts 1:8–11

***Note:** An amazing aspect of David's prophecies in Psalm 22 is that David was not aware of crucifixion as a form of capital punishment. As he was writing (approximately 1000 B.C.), the most common form of capital punishment for the nation of Israel was stoning.

> "When it is remembered that crucifixion was a Roman, not Jewish, form of execution, the proof of inspiration is irresistible." —*C. I. Scofield*

a. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70

> *"And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."* Matt. 24:2

In A.D. 70 the Roman armies under Titus besieged Jerusalem for 143 days. Josephus states that Titus finally ordered the entire city to be burned to the ground. The city wall "was so completely leveled

Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem **by Gustave Doré**

"And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord . . ." *Matt. 21:9* with the ground that there was no longer anything to lead those who visited the spot to believe that it had ever been inhabited."

It was said that the heat of the burning city melted the gold of the temple. The resulting liquid seeped between the large foundational stones. The greedy soldiers (regularly paid by plunder) took the temple apart stone by stone in order to reach the gold.

b. The unnatural death of Simon Peter prophesied by Jesus Christ

> *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, . . . when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God."* John 21:18–19

Jerome states that Simon Peter (at his request) was crucified upside down. Peter felt he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Master.

B. The scientific accuracy of the Bible

Although the Bible was not written as a science book, yet when the Bible speaks concerning matters of science, it is scientifically accurate.

1. Scripture

a. God created the universe ex nihilo (out of nothing).

> *"Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."* Heb. 11:3

b. Moisture in the atmosphere goes through a cycle of evaporation and condensation.

> *"He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain."* Ps. 135:7

c. The earth is spherical in shape.

> *"It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth."* Isa. 40:22

d. The earth rotates upon its axis.

> *"The earth . . . is turned as clay to the seal."* Job 38:13–14

e. The earth is suspended in space.

> *"He . . . hangeth the earth upon nothing."* Job 26:7

f. Tides vary in the late evening and early morning hours.

> *"He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end."* Job 26:10

g. The stars cannot be numbered.

> *"The host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured."* Jer. 33:22

Note: In 130 B.C. Hipparchus counted 1,022 stars, and in A.D. 200 Ptolemy counted 1,026 stars. Man still does not know the total number of stars in the universe.

h. The atmosphere has weight.

> *"to make the weight for the winds"* Job 28:25

Note: This was not known by scientists until the seventeenth century.

i. The stars travel in certain paths.

"the stars in their courses" Judg. 5:20

j. The blood sustains life.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood." Lev. 17:11

k. The universe is running down.

"The earth . . . and the heavens . . . shall wax old like a garment." Ps. 102:25–26

l. The stars are a great distance from the earth.

"And behold the height of the stars, how high they are!" Job 22:12

m. The stars differ in magnitude.

"One star differeth from another star in glory." 1 Cor. 15:41

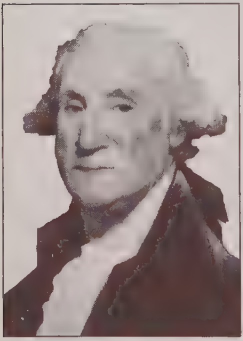
n. The chemical composition of man and the earth is identical.

"He remembereth that we are dust." Ps. 103:14

2. Illustrations of the scientific accuracy of the Bible

a. George Washington

His secretary, Tobias Lear, gave the following account of the events that led up to the death of the first President of the United States:



George Washington

"On Dec. 12, 1799, Washington rode for about five hours to several of his farms in sub-freezing cold. In spite of the fact that he developed a severe cold, he again went out on Dec. 13 to check on his farms. That night he awoke several times complaining that it was extremely difficult for him to swallow.

"Mr. Rawlins [one of his overseers] came in soon after sunrise and prepared to bleed him. [This was the accepted medical practice in the late eighteenth century. Either a leech was attached to the patient and allowed to suck his blood freely or the physician made a small incision in the arm of the patient and allowed a portion of his blood to drain into a basin.]

"Two of his personal physicians arrived and all agreed this method should continue to be the procedure throughout the day. Those watching said the blood came very slowly toward the end. He died that night."

The practice of bleeding, which by many persons was thought to have killed him, was then so widely used that his doctors would have been censured if they had omitted it. Sixty years later it was still in use, and no one can doubt it deprived [George Washington] of his chance of living.

The irony of the whole account was that beside his bed that day was a copy of the Bible. In that Bible could be found Leviticus 17:11—"For the life of the flesh is in the blood."

—Summarized from *William Roscoe Thayer, George Washington* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1922), pp. 240ff.

WHAT GREAT SCIENTISTS HAVE SAID ABOUT THE BIBLE

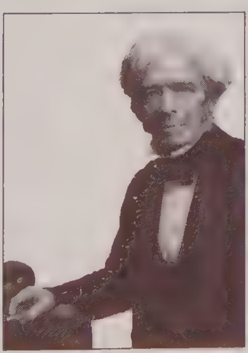
"Why will people go astray when they have this blessed Book to guide them?" —*Michael Faraday*

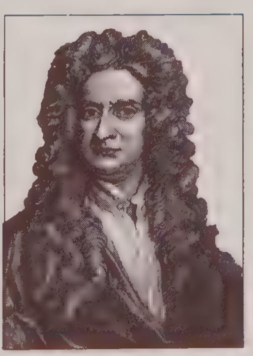
"If all the great books of the world were given life and were brought together in Convention, the moment the Bible entered, the other books would fall on their faces as the gods of Philistia fell when the ark of God was brought into their presence in the temple of Dagon." —*Sir Isaac Newton*

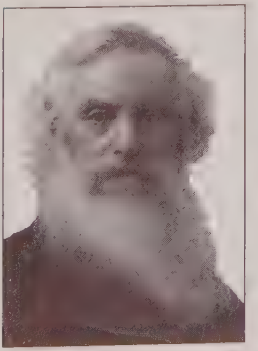
"I like to study the Guide Book to the country where I am going."
—*Samuel F. B. Morse*

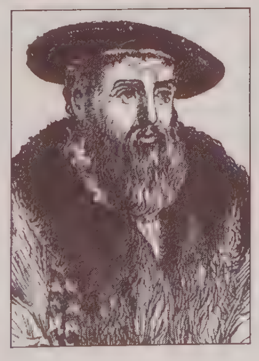
"All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more strongly the truths contained in the Holy Scriptures."
—*Sir William Herschel*

"The chief aim of all investigations of the external world should be to discover the rational order and harmony which has been imposed on it by God and which He revealed to us in the language of mathematics."
—*Johannes Kepler*


Michael Faraday


Isaac Newton

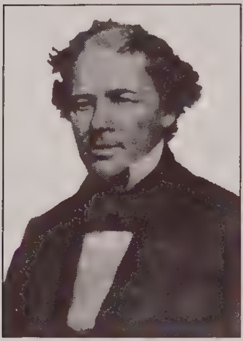

Samuel F. B. Morse


Johannes Kepler

b. French Academy of Science

In 1861 the French Academy of Science published a brochure in which they listed fifty-one scientific facts that supposedly contradicted the Bible. Today not one scientist believes any one of those "supposed errors." Though our scientific knowledge continues to experience change, the Bible does not change.

c. Matthew Maury (1806–1873)



Matthew Maury

Matthew Maury spent much of his life as a United States naval officer traveling on the oceans of the world. During an illness he read in the Psalms a reference to "the paths of the seas" (Ps. 8:8). Believing in the complete scientific accuracy of the Bible, he searched and found what the Bible had revealed thousands of years earlier: the ocean currents travel in specific paths. He was able to gather enough information from many voyages to be able to chart those currents on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. As a result, those who followed his charts were able to cut down their sailing time considerably.

* * *

Lesson

6 The Proofs of Inspiration (continued)

We have seen the Bible's claim of inspiration, its indestructibility, its fulfilled prophecies, and its scientific accuracy. The evidence continues to mount. We will now view its inerrancy, its historical accuracy, and its wonderful power to transform the human heart.

A. The inerrancy of the Bible

Inerrancy means the Bible is without error throughout, whether it is speaking historically, scientifically, or morally.

1. An inerrant Book indicates a perfect Author.

(Inaccurate writings or speeches would reveal a less-than-perfect author.)

> *"How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken."* Deut. 18:21–22

2. The Bible claims that every detail within its pages is without error.

> *"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."* Matt. 5:18

3. Christ authenticated the passages which have most often been challenged as to their accuracy.

Matthew 12:40	Jonah and the great fish
Matthew 12:41	Repentance of the city of Nineveh
Matthew 19:3–9	Creation and marriage
Luke 17:26–27	The Flood
Luke 17:28–29	Destruction of Sodom
Luke 17:32	Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt*
Luke 4:27	Miraculous healing of Naaman's leprosy
John 3:14	The brazen serpent

4. Those who most often question the accuracy of the Bible are those who do not give it serious study.

"The Bible is full of errors" is an expression usually repeated by an individual ignorant of Biblical truth.

B. The historical accuracy of the Bible

1. Archaeology has confirmed the existence of peoples who were once questioned by Bible skeptics.

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* **Note:** The Jewish historian Josephus recounted the story of the destruction of Sodom and the transformation of Lot's wife into a "stele" (or pillar of salt). He added, "And I have observed it, for it still remains even to this day **[first century]**."

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote in the **second century** that Lot's wife remained "a pillar of salt unto this day . . . no longer corruptible flesh, but a pillar of salt which endures forever."

The existence of the **Hittites** was questioned in spite of numerous Biblical references to them (Exod. 33:2; Deut. 7:1, 20:17; Josh. 3:10, 24:11). In 1906 Hugo Winkler of Berlin began excavations at Boghazkoy, 90 miles east of Ankara. He discovered it was an ancient Hittite capital. Numerous clay tablets were discovered which were inscribed in the cuneiform characters of the Hittite language.

Now it is known that two great periods of Hittite power are to be noted. The first goes back to 1700 B.C. and the second to c. 1450–1200 B.C. The great Hittite Empire collapsed in 1200 B.C. and the Hittite capital of Boghazkoy fell at that time.

The Brazen Serpent **by Gustave Doré**

"And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." *Num. 21:9*

2. Archaeology has confirmed the accuracy of the names, times, and places of reign of over forty different kings by means of documents contemporary with the Bible.

   The skeptics for years questioned the existence of **Belshazzar** as a king of Babylon. No Babylonian record known until a few years ago mentioned this king by name. Recent archaeological discoveries have established not only his existence but also his association with his father Nabonidus, king of Babylon, and his relationship to Nebuchadnezzar.

   Although Nabonidus was officially king, he left the rule of Babylon to his son, Belshazzar. For this reason, Belshazzar was only able to offer Daniel the position of "third ruler in the kingdom" (Dan. 5:16, 29). Nabonidus was first, Belshazzar was second, and Daniel could only be third. Once again the complete historical accuracy of God's Word is verified.

3. Archaeology has confirmed that writing was highly developed when Moses wrote the Pentateuch.

   For years skeptics doubted that Moses was capable of writing in the year 1500 B.C. But the deciphering of the famous **Sinai script** in 1948 showed that the Hebrews or their fellow Semites had invented the first alphabet well before 1500 B.C., making it possible for Moses to write the Pentateuch. In fact, the **Code of Hammurabi** and other ancient writings show that cuneiform writing had been invented by the time of Abraham, 500 years before the days of Moses.

4. Those who have accepted the premise that the Bible is historically accurate have made some amazing discoveries.

   > "The fact that the Standard Oil Company discovered oil and is operating wells in Egypt is generally known, but the reason for its going to that ancient land to look for oil is probably not so well known.
   >
   > "It is asserted that one of the directors of the company happened to read the second chapter of Exodus. The third verse caught his attention. It states that the ark of bulrushes which the mother of Moses made for her child was 'daubed with slime and with pitch.'
   >
   > "This gentleman reasoned that where there was pitch, there must be oil, and if there was oil in Moses' time, it is probably still there. So the company sent out Charles Whitshott, its geologist and oil expert, to make investigations, with the result that oil was discovered." —*Paul Lee Tan, ed.,* Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations (Rockville, Maryland: Assurance Publishers), p. 191.

5. Statements by Dr. Nelson Glueck (widely recognized as the dean of Palestinian archaeologists) confirm the historical accuracy of the Bible.

   > "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of

Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries. They form tesserae [small rectangular tiles] in the vast mosaic of the Bible's almost incredible correct historical memory." —*Rivers in the Desert* (N.Y.: Farrar, Straus, and Cudaly, 1959), p. 11.

C. The Bible's power to transform lives

1. Scripture

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." Ps. 119:9

"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD*; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"* Jer. 23:29

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17

"It is the power of God unto salvation." Rom. 1:16

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12

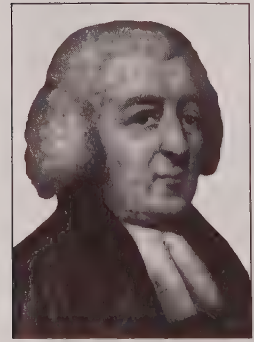
"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Pet. 2:2

2. Examples of the Bible's power to transform lives

a. The **Apostle Paul**

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. 1:12–15

b. **John Newton** (A.D. 1725–1807), hymn writer of "Amazing Grace"


John Newton

John Newton of England was probably as wicked a man as has ever lived. As a young man he ran away to sea, where his sinful behavior almost cost him his life on several occasions. He was eventually sold as a slave in Africa and reduced to living on crumbs and roots he dug up under the secrecy of night. When he finally escaped, he accepted the vile life style of all with whom he came in contact. But through a missionary God laid hold on his life. Newton accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior, and later God called him to preach.

Although John Newton was a great preacher, he is probably best remembered as a writer of hymns, many of which are still sung around the world. Perhaps his most famous hymn, "Amazing Grace," was his personal testimony.

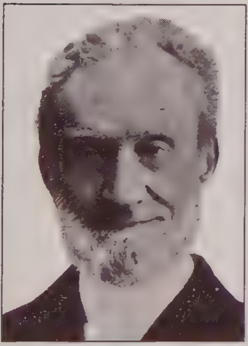
Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

He also wrote "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" and "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds."

In the church in London of which he was the pastor, there is still an epitaph which John Newton wrote for himself. It reads:

> Sacred to the memory of
> John Newton
> once a libertine and blasphemer and slave of slaves
> in Africa, but renewed, purified, pardoned,
> and appointed to preach the Gospel
> which he had laboured to destroy.

c. **George Müller** (1805–1898)



George Müller

George Müller, as a German youth of sixteen, was already living a life of drunkenness, gambling, thievery, and rebellion. On one occasion he was arrested and imprisoned for theft. At the age of twenty he was invited by a friend to a home Bible study and prayer meeting. The sight of a dedicated young man there praying to a personal God gripped his heart. That night in the privacy of his room he cried out to God and asked Him to save his wretched soul. His life was dramatically changed.

As a college student at the University of Halle he observed two things that were later to change the course of his ministry. He observed the tremendous ministry of the orphanage in the lives of young people, and he met workers in that ministry whose daily needs were met by God. When God called him to work as a missionary in London, and later Bristol, England, God used those impressions to motivate him to establish orphanages in Bristol (and elsewhere) by faith in God's provisions.

Throughout the rest of his life, George Müller made it a daily practice to read and study the Bible and appropriate God's promises by faith and prayer. Although he engaged in no appeals for funds and did not make his needs known publicly, Müller was able to provide for his orphanages and for more than 2,000 orphans on the basis of taking God at His Word. In addition, Müller was able to contribute over $135,000 to other missionary and charitable causes because of his faith in a prayer-answering God. His great answers to prayer and his dedication to the God of the Bible have inspired other Christians to pray and trust God for their needs.

WHAT OUTSTANDING MEN AND WOMEN HAVE SAID ABOUT THE BIBLE

"What is the secret of England's superiority among the nations? Go tell your prince that this [the Bible] is the secret of England's political greatness." *—Queen Victoria of England*

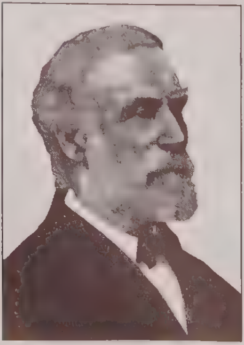
"Forty years I have loved the Word of God. I feel the blessed pages under my hand with special thankfulness, as a rod and a staff to keep my steps firm through the valley of shadow of depression and world calamity. Truly, the Bible, the teaching of our Savior, is the 'only way out of the dark.' " *—Hellen Keller*

"The Bible, a book in comparison with which, in my eyes, all others are of minor importance, has never failed to give me strength." *—Robert E. Lee*

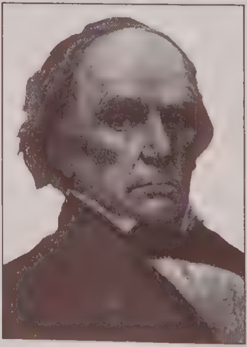
"If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity." *—Daniel Webster*

Queen Victoria

Hellen Keller



Robert E. Lee



Daniel Webster

Lesson 7 The Canonicity of the Bible

A **canon** is a measuring rod, rule, or standard. In reference to the Bible, the Canon means those books measured and found satisfactory as a part of the inspired Word of God. ***Canonicity*** (kăn′*un*•ĭs′*i*•tĭ) is a book's right to be included in the Biblical Canon because God has determined it so and man has recognized it as inspired by God.

A. Canonicity is determined by God.

Canonicity must be viewed in two stages. Canonicity is determined by God and recognized by man. But man's attitude does not dictate whether or not a book is canonical. A specific book is valuable because it is canonical, not canonical because it is valuable. If the latter were true, man would become the final authority in determining God's Word.

In spite of the fact that the Bible does not discuss the canonization of the Bible per se, it may not be as difficult to determine as might first be imagined. Little else was being written when the books of the Old Testament were being recorded. The Scripture was given by God to men who were in positions of authority and were consistently considered to be the spokesmen for God. Moses, for example, simply preserved in writing what God had orally given to him. Fifty percent of Exodus and ninety percent of Leviticus are direct quotations from God.

In the New Testament, the words of Christ (God incarnate) revealed much about the books He determined to be canonical. Jesus Christ quoted freely from many of the books of the Old Testament and referred to them as Scripture from God. He also stamped with divine approval the books that would be written (the New Testament).

Christ quoting Psalm 118:22–23:

> *"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"* Matt. 21:42

Christ quoting Isaiah 61:1–2:

> *"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the syna-*

> *gogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."* Luke 4:16–21

Christ preauthenticating the New Testament:

> *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: . . . and he will shew you things to come."* John 16:13

B. Canonicity is recognized by man.

How did the early church leaders recognize God's Word? The following five questions were posed by the early church leaders as an aid in accurately recognizing God's Word. By means of the following questions they were able to recognize the canonicity of the 66 books of our Bible.

1. Is it **authoritative?**

The first question they asked was: "Does a particular book have the authority of God behind it?" Use of phrases such as "thus saith the Lord," and "the word of the Lord came" were considered significant. No Hebrew individual would have lightly added phrases such as those to any book unless he knew it was actually the Word of God.

2. Is it **prophetic?**

The next question they asked was whether or not a book was written by a man of God (e.g., a prophet or one with apostolic authority). Some books were temporarily questioned because of differences in style from one of an author's writings to another. But it was quickly realized that one person can easily write in two different styles depending upon the content of his writing. A lawyer writes far differently when he is preparing a legal brief than when he is writing a love letter to his wife.

It should be pointed out that the fact that a book was questioned does not mean its case for canonicity is weak. On the contrary, solid testing makes it stronger because it has passed the test and come forth as gold. These early scholars had such a holy reverence for the Word of God that they wanted to make sure they were not guilty of adding to the Word of God a book that had no right to be considered such.

Who were these human writers of the words that were breathed of God? Although some are unknown, the ones that are known were clearly men of God (see chart opposite).

3. Is it **authentic?**

This question attempts to determine whether or not a certain book reveals **God's truth.** A book that taught lying for the glory of God or prayer for the dead was quickly rejected. It was not considered to be authentic. Most of the **Apocrypha** (books written between the Old and New Testaments) was denied canonicity because of its failure to agree with the Scriptures. The Apocrypha is not authentic; therefore, it is not a part of the Canon.

WRITER	INSPIRED WRITINGS
Moses	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalm 90
Joshua	Joshua
Ezra	Ezra, 1 & 2 Chronicles (probably; not certain)
Nehemiah	Nehemiah
Mordecai	Esther (?) (Ezra and Nehemiah are also possible writers of Esther.)
David	Psalms (wrote at least 73 of the Psalms)
Asaph	Psalm 50, Psalms 73–83
Descendants of Korah	Psalms 42, 44–49, 84, 87–88
Heman the Ezrahite	Psalm 88
Ethan the Ezrahite	Psalm 89
Solomon	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Psalm 72 (?), Psalm 127
Isaiah	Isaiah
Jeremiah	Jeremiah, Lamentations, 1 & 2 Kings (?)
Ezekiel	Ezekiel
Daniel	Daniel
Hosea	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obadiah
Jonah	Jonah
Micah	Micah
Nahum	Nahum
Habakkuk	Habakkuk
Zephaniah	Zephaniah
Haggai	Haggai
Zechariah	Zechariah
Malachi	Malachi
Matthew	Gospel of Matthew
Mark	Gospel of Mark
Luke	Gospel of Luke, Acts of the Apostles
John the Apostle	Gospel of John; 1, 2, & 3 John; The Revelation
Paul	Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews (?)
James (half-brother of Jesus)	James
Peter	1 & 2 Peter
Jude	Jude

Note: The authorship of the following books is not certain: Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, Job, and several Psalms.

It should also be noted that the Lord does not approve of all the sentiments which the Bible records. Inspiration indicates the accuracy of the record but does not indicate that God is pleased with the sins and some of the statements that are recorded. God cannot condone sin nor approve Satan's lies. These revelations were given to us so we could see the folly of sin and life apart from God.

The book of Ecclesiastes is an example of this. In Ecclesiastes God shows us that the best of the conclusions that a man can reach on his own about the wisdom of life is "vanity."

4. Is it **dynamic?**

   This question seeks to discover whether a book possesses the **power** of God. Is the book able to change lives? Each book has as its theme Jesus Christ. Luke 24:44 records that the entire Old Testament speaks of Christ. The Old Testament as well as the New Testament is sufficient to lead a person to the Savior. Each book possesses the power of God.

   > *"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned . . . And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures [Old Testament], which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* 2 Tim. 3:14–15

5. Was it **received, used,** and **preserved** by the people of God?

   2 Peter 3:15–16 indicates that the writings of Paul were immediately accepted as canonical.

   > *"Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood."*

   The other books of the Bible were quickly accepted and used as Scripture as they became available. The early Jews went to great lengths to preserve the writings of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The writings of the early church leaders consistently quoted from these sources as being authoritative.

◆

Many years ago in England a group of Bible scholars were discussing different thought-provoking questions. The question arose, "Suppose the New Testament had been destroyed and every copy lost at the end of the third century; could it be reconstructed from the writings of the Church Fathers of the second and third centuries?" One individual at that meeting, Sir David Dalrymple (1726–1792), accepted the challenge. For the next two months he searched through all the documents of the second and third century church leaders. He reported back to the group that, in spite of his limited time and resources, he had been able to reconstruct from the writings of those early expositors of God's Word the entire New Testament except for eleven verses.

Immediate Acceptance of the Scriptures

"For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have), but only twenty-two books,* which contain the records of all the past times, which are justly believed to be divine. . . . It is true our [Jewish] history hath been written since Artaxerxes [the Apocrypha] very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time: and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation, is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one hath been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them; but **it is become natural to all Jews,** immediately and from their birth, **to esteem these books to contain divine doctrines,** and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, **willingly to die for them.**" —*Flavius Josephus,*
First Century Jewish historian

"Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the Gospel first began to be preached? Truly, **under the inspiration of the Spirit,** he wrote to you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even then parties had been formed among you." —*Clement of Rome* (A.D. 96), personal
friend of Paul (Phil. 4:3) in his
letter to the Corinthians
reminding them of 1 Cor. 3:4–10

"I am sure that you are well trained in the **sacred Scriptures,** . . . Now, as it is said in these Scriptures: 'Be angry and sin not,' and 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.' Blessed is he who remembers this."—*Polycarp,*
bishop of Smyrna and personal friend of
the apostle John quoting from Eph. 4:26
(c. A.D. 115). In this letter to the church at
Philippi, Polycarp quoted from or alluded to
22 of the 27 New Testament books.

[I am writing] "to persuade you that you have not understood anything of the Scriptures, I will remind you of another psalm, **dictated to David by the Holy Spirit.**"—*Justin Martyr*
(martyred in A.D. 165)

"Irenaeus [died A.D. 202] stated that the apostles taught that God is the Author of both Testaments (*Against Heretics* IV 32.2) and evidently considered the New Testament writings to form a second Canon. He quoted from every chapter of Matthew, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians, from all but one or two chapters of Luke, John, Romans, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, from most chapters of Mark, . . . Acts, 2 Corinthians, and Revelation." —*Wilbur N. Pickering*

One Lord God does she [the Church] acknowledge, the Creator of the universe, and Christ Jesus (born) of the Virgin Mary, the Son of God the Creator; and the Resurrection of the flesh; the **law and the prophets** she **unites in one volume with the writings of evangelists and apostles,** from which she drinks in her faith."
—*Tertullian* (A.D. 208)

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*To see how twenty-two books of Josephus consist of the thirty-nine books of our Old Testament, see lesson 8.

WHAT AMERICAN PRESIDENTS HAVE SAID ABOUT THE BIBLE

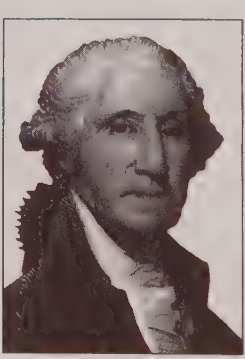
"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."
—George Washington

"That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests."
—Andrew Jackson

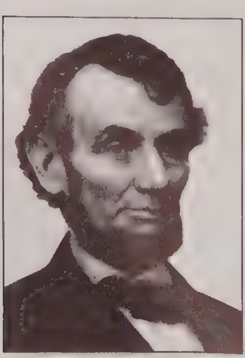
"The Bible is the Word of life—it is a picture of the human heart displayed for all ages and all sorts of conditions of men. I feel sorry for the men who do not read the Bible every day. I wonder why they deprive themselves of the strength and pleasure."
—Woodrow Wilson

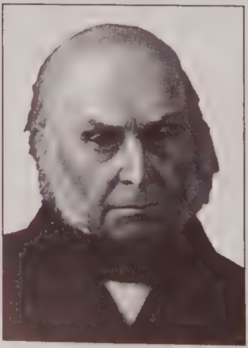
"I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book." *—Abraham Lincoln*

"So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year." *—John Quincy Adams*


George Washington

Andrew Jackson


Abraham Lincoln


John Quincy Adams

Lesson

8 The Canonicity of the Bible (continued)

We have seen how God determined in eternity past which books to include in the canon of Scripture. We also learned the process by which man was able to recognize the Scripture as being from God. Any question of canonicity was removed when Jesus Christ, God Himself, approved of the 39 books of the Old Testament and preauthenticated the 27 books of the New Testament.

A. The canonicity of the Old Testament was approved by Christ.

1. The Old Testament's three main sections were approved by Christ.

> *"And he [Christ] said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."* Luke 24:44

It is clear that the threefold division of the Old Testament that Christ alluded to was the typical division of the Old Testament in His day. Josephus, Jewish historian of the first century, described the Old Testament canon in this exact threefold manner:

JOSEPHUS' DIVISION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT*

Books of Moses

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

Psalms

1. Psalms
2. Proverbs
3. Ecclesiastes
4. Job

Prophets

1. Joshua
2. Judges–Ruth
3. Samuel (1 & 2)
4. Kings (1 & 2)
5. Chronicles (1 & 2)
6. Ezra–Nehemiah
7. Esther
8. Isaiah
9. Jeremiah–Lamentations
10. Ezekiel
11. Daniel
12. Twelve Minor Prophets
13. Song of Solomon

2. Jesus Christ approved the Old Testament Canon.

> *"From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."* Luke 11:51

*Several books seem to have been grouped as one during the time of Christ (and Josephus). In addition, one book often stood as the title for all other books in its section. For example, "Psalms" was the title for the poetic section in the first century.

Modern Division of the Old Testament

Law

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

History

1. Joshua
2. Judges
3. Ruth
4. 1 Samuel
5. 2 Samuel
6. 1 Kings
7. 2 Kings
8. 1 Chronicles
9. 2 Chronicles
10. Ezra
11. Nehemiah
12. Esther

Poetry

1. Job
2. Psalms
3. Proverbs
4. Ecclesiastes
5. Song of Solomon

Major Prophets

1. Isaiah
2. Jeremiah
3. Lamentations
4. Ezekiel
5. Daniel

Minor Prophets

1. Hosea
2. Joel
3. Amos
4. Obadiah
5. Jonah
6. Micah
7. Nahum
8. Habakkuk
9. Zephaniah
10. Haggai
11. Zechariah
12. Malachi

The "blood of Abel" is found in Genesis 4:8, and the "blood of Zacharias" is found in 2 Chronicles 24:21. While Genesis is the first book of the Hebrew Old Testament, 2 Chronicles is the last book (see chart below). Christ is putting His stamp of approval on every book of the Old Testament from the first to the last.

Order of Old Testament Books in the Hebrew Bible

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy
6. Joshua
7. Judges
8. 1 Samuel
9. 2 Samuel
10. 1 Kings
11. 2 Kings
12. Isaiah
13. Jeremiah
14. Ezekiel
15. Hosea
16. Joel
17. Amos
18. Obadiah
19. Jonah
20. Micah
21. Nahum
22. Habakkuk
23. Zephaniah
24. Haggai
25. Zechariah
26. Malachi
27. Psalms
28. Job
29. Proverbs
30. Ruth
31. Song of Solomon
32. Ecclesiastes
33. Lamentations
34. Esther
35. Daniel
36. Ezra
37. Nehemiah
38. 1 Chronicles
39. 2 Chronicles

Chronology of Hebrew History

Historical Period	Biblical Writings of the Period
Beginning of Hebrew History 1920–1491 B.C.	Genesis, Job (?)
Wilderness Wanderings 1491–1451 B.C.	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
Conquest 1451–1443 B.C.	Joshua
Period of Judges 1443–1095 B.C.	Judges, Ruth
United Kingdom 1095–975 B.C.	1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings 1–11, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
Divided Kingdom 975–605 B.C.	1 Kings 12–22, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah
Babylonian Exile 605–536 B.C.	Ezekiel, Daniel, Habakkuk
Post-Exilic Period 536–c. 400 B.C.	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

It must also be kept in mind that our present listing of Old and New Testament books is not chronological. The major and minor prophets were writing during the times of the kings, the Babylonian exile, and the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. The chart above may be helpful in getting the correct perspective of our Old Testament books and Hebrew history. (The entire New Testament was written during the first century, closing with the book of the Revelation, which was written in A.D. 95–96.)

3. Quotations of the Old Testament by Christ show His approval of the canon.

   In the four Gospels there are at least thirty-five direct references to the Scriptures by the Son of God:

   > Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; cf. Luke 4:4, 8, 12. Luke 4:16–27. Matt. 5:17, 18, 21–43. Matt. 6:29. Matt. 8:4; cf. Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14. Matt. 8:11; cf. Luke 13:28. Matt. 9:13. Luke 16:29–31. Matt. 10:15; cf. Mark 6:11. Matt. 11:10; cf. Luke 7:26, 27. Matt. 12:3–8; cf. Mark 2:24–28; Luke 6:3–5. Matt. 12:40–42; cf. Luke 11:29–32. Matt. 13:14, 15. Matt. 15:1–9; cf. Mark 7:6–12.

Matt. 16:4. Matt. 17:11; cf. Mark 9:11–13. Matt. 19:3–9; cf. Mark 10:2–12. Matt. 19:18, 19; cf. Mark 10:19; Luke 10:26, 27; 18:20. Luke 18:31. Matt. 21:13–16; cf. Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46. Matt. 21:42; cf. Mark 12:10, 11; Luke 20:17. Matt. 22:28–33; cf. Mark 12:24–31; Luke 20:37–39. Matt. 22:36–40. Matt. 22:34, 44, 45; cf. Mark 12:35–37; Luke 20:41–44. Matt. 23:1–3, 23, 35; cf. Luke 11:51. Matt. 24:15, 16; cf. Mark 13:14. Luke 17:26–31. Matt. 24:24, 31. Mark 14:21, 27. Luke 22:37. Matt. 26:53–56. Mark 14:49. Matt. 27:46; cf. Mark 15:34. Luke 23:46. Luke 24:25–32, 44–47. John 1:51; 3:14; 5:39, 45–47; 6:32, 45; 7:19–23, 38, 39; 8:39, 40, 44, 56–58; 10:33–36; 13:18, 26; 17:12, 17; 19:28.

B. The canonicity of the New Testament was preauthenticated by Christ.

1. Christ preapproved of the New Testament by promises He made to the apostles.

   "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: . . . and he will shew you things to come." John 16:13

   "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26

2. The apostles were aware that God was giving them His precious Word.

   "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 20:30–31

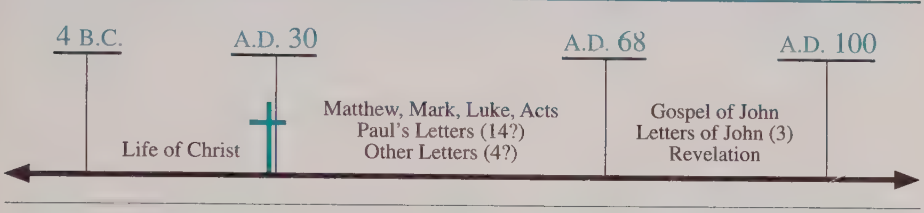
   "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." 1 Cor. 2:13

MODERN DIVISION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

GOSPELS	1. Matthew	2. Mark	3. Luke	4. John
HISTORY	Acts			
PAULINE EPISTLES	1. Romans 2. 1 Corinthians 3. 2 Corinthians 4. Galatians 5. Ephesians	6. Philippians 7. Colossians 8. 1 Thessalonians 9. 2 Thessalonians 10. 1 Timothy	11. 2 Timothy 12. Titus 13. Philemon 14. Hebrews (?)	
GENERAL	1. James 2. 1 Peter 3. 2 Peter	4. 1 John 5. 2 John 6. 3 John	7. Jude	
PROPHECY	Revelation			

The writer of a New Testament book had to be an individual with **apostolic authority.** We believe, therefore, that when the apostle John finished writing the book of the Revelation the New Testament canon was complete.

Time Setting of the New Testament Writings



C. The canonicity of the Apocrypha is rejected.

The Apocrypha is a group of books written during the period between the Old and the New Testaments and found in the Roman Catholic versions of the Bible. They are denied canonicity for the following reasons:

1. They **never claim inspiration** for themselves.
2. Some of their teaching is **heretical.**

The Apocrypha teaches such un-Scriptural doctrines as sinless perfection, the worship of angels, prayer for the dead, and almsgiving for salvation. Notice the obviously wrong statements of the Apocrypha given at the top of p. 58.

3. They were **never sanctioned** by the early church leaders.

On one occasion Augustine argued Bible doctrine with a contemporary. His antagonist proceeded to quote from 2 Maccabees. Augustine replied that his case must be weak if he had to resort to a book not in the same category as those received and accepted by the Jews.

4. They were **never allowed a place in the canon** for the first four centuries after Christ.

In A.D. 404 Jerome, in translating the Latin Vulgate, distinguished the Apocrypha from the Canon, which in effect accorded to them a secondary status. Some of the apocryphal books were included with early copies of the English Bible, but mainly as a historical reference. Those same English Bibles also included detailed genealogical records and a complete hymnal. Since printed material was at a premium the early church member could find everything he needed in one volume, some inspired (the Bible) and some not (the Apocrypha, genealogies, expository notes, and hymns).

APOCRYPHAL HERESY

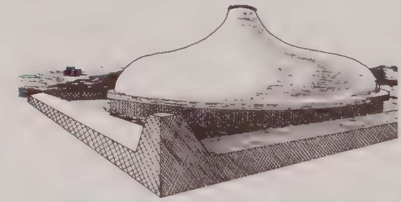
"For alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin. Those that exercise alms and righteousness, shall be filled with life." *Tobit 12:9*

"For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain, to pray for the dead." *2 Maccabees 12:44*

5. Books in the Apocrypha not only **contradict the Bible,** but they also **contradict each other.**
6. The **quality** of the Apocrypha **is far below that of the Bible,** even to the point of occasionally teaching immorality.

   The Apocrypha teaches that lying can be all right on occasion if it is done "for the glory of God." It also recommends suicide, assassination, and black magic as viable alternatives in critical situations.
7. The books of the Apocrypha were **never received by the people of God.**

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS


the Shrine of the Book Museum, Jerusalem

In 1947 the religious world was thrilled with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves of Qumran near the northwest bank of the Dead Sea. Until that find the earliest Hebrew manuscript available was dated in the tenth century after Christ. In the eleven caves of Qumran thousands of leather fragments and some of the papyrus have been recovered which date from 100 B.C. to A.D. 100. All the Old Testament books except Esther are represented by the Dead Sea Scrolls. The most complete scrolls include two of Isaiah, one of the Psalms, and one of Leviticus. In spite of the fact that (1) the scrolls also include many secular works and (2) the scrolls are dated after the time of the writing of the Apocrypha, the books in the Apocrypha are not represented significantly in the manuscripts discovered at Qumran. The Dead Sea Scrolls are housed in Jerusalem's beautiful Shrine of the Book Museum, shown above.

What Intellectuals Have Said about the Bible

"It is a belief in the Bible which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life . . . The farther the ages advance in civilization the more will the Bible be used."

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"Peruse the books of philosophers with all their pomp of diction. How meager, how contemptible are they when compared with the Scriptures! The majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration."

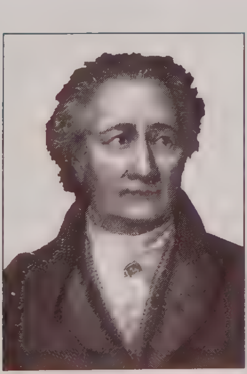
—Jean Jacques Rousseau

"No better lessons can I teach my child than those of the Bible."

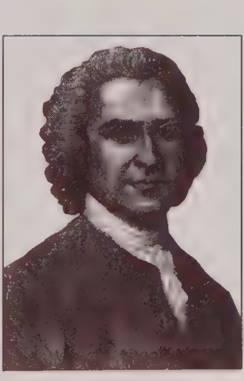
—Denis Diderot

"Young man, my advice to you is that you cultivate an acquaintance with and firm belief in the Holy Scriptures, for this is your certain interest. I think Christ's system of morals and religion, as He left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is likely to see."

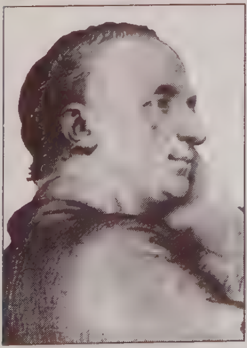
—Benjamin Franklin



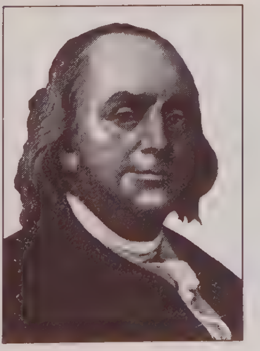
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Jean Jacques Rousseau



Denis Diderot



Benjamin Franklin

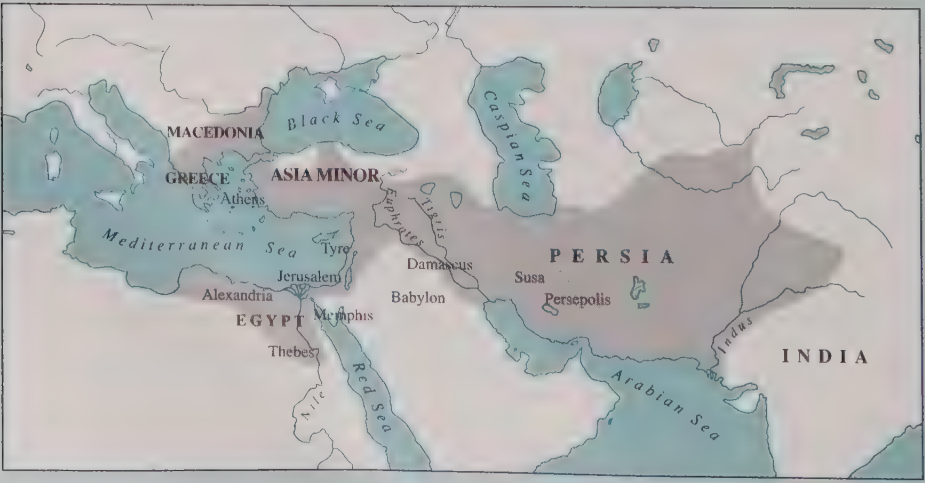
THE GREEK LANGUAGE

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending." Rev. 1:8

Α α	alpha
Β β	beta
Γ γ	gamma
Δ δ	delta
Ε ε	epsilon
Ζ ζ	zeta
Η η	eta
θ θ	theta
Ι ι	iota
Κ κ	kappa
Λ λ	lambda
Μ μ	mu
Ν ν	nu
Ξ ξ	xi
Ο ο	omicron
Π π	pi
Ρ ρ	rho
Σ σ,s	sigma
Τ τ	tau
ϒ υ	upsilon
Φ φ	phi
Χ χ	chi
Ψ ψ	psi
Ω ω	omega

As Alexander the Great established his Greek empire by conquering the known world in the fourth century B.C., he spread his Greek language as well. Alexander's Greek was not the standard literary language of the Hellenistic Age (c. 300–30 B.C.) but a modified and simplified common **(koine)** Greek of the eastern Mediterranean. It was the language of the common person. Therefore, it was the perfect language for the gospel of the New Testament, the message of salvation in Jesus Christ to a dying world.

As the Hebrew language was the perfect vehicle for the Old Testament narratives, so koine Greek was the perfect vehicle for the precision of New Testament doctrine. This exactness is especially seen in the Greek language's intricate verb system. In the present tense the Greek verb can show indefinite or progressive action. The past tense (aorist or perfect systems) can show events fulfilled in the past as well as past actions with continuous results. These nuances of meaning are especially important regarding the work of God in the past which still has significance today. The following charts show how one verb, *luo* ("to loose"), can be translated in each of its different systems by the closest English equivalent possible.


MACEDONIA
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
GREECE
ASIA MINOR
Athens
Euphrates
Tigris
Mediterranean Sea
Tyre
Jerusalem
Damascus
PERSIA
Susa
Alexandria
Babylon
Persepolis
EGYPT
Memphis
Indus
INDIA
Thebes
Red Sea
Nile
Arabian Sea

the Empire of Alexander the Great

GREEK VERB SYSTEM: PRESENT

ACTIVE VOICE

Indicative	Present tense	λύω	*luō*	"I loose, I am loosing"
	Imperfect tense	’έλῦον	*eluon*	"I was loosing"
Subjunctive	(always present)	λύω	*luō*	"I would/should loose"
Optative	(always present)	λύοιμι	*luoimi*	"May I loose" (very rare in NT)
Imperative	(always present)	λῦε	*lue*	"You (Thou) loose!" no first person
Infinitive	(all inclusive)	λύειν	*luein*	"To loose"
Participle	(verbal noun or adjective)	λύων	*luōn*	"loosing"

MIDDLE VOICE

(Subjunctive, Optative, Imperative, Infinitive, and Participle are the same for the Passive Voice.)

Indicative	Present tense	λύομαι	*luomai*	"I loose for myself" (intent)
	Imperfect tense	ἐλῦόμην	*eluomēn*	"I was loosing for myself"
Subjunctive	(always present)	λύωμαι	*luōmai*	"I would/should loose for myself"
Optative	(always present)	λῦοίμην	*luoimēn*	"May I loose for myself"
Imperative	(always present)	λύου	*luou*	"You (Thou) loose for thyself"
Infinitive	(all inclusive)	λύεσθαι	*luesthai*	"To loose for one's self"
Participle	(verbal noun or adjective)	λῦόμενος	*luomenos*	"loosing for one's self"

PASSIVE VOICE

Indicative	Present tense	λύομαι	*luomai*	"I am being loosed"
	Imperfect tense	ἐλῦόμην	*eluomēn*	"I was being loosed"

GREEK VERB SYSTEM: AORIST

ACTIVE VOICE

Indicative	Aorist	ἔλῡσα	*elusa*	"I loosed"
Subjunctive	Aorist	λύσω	*lusō*	"I should/was motivated to loose" (with the understanding that I did)
Imperative	Aorist	λῦσον	*luson*	"Loose!" (in past sense)
Infinitive	Aorist	λῦσαι	*lusai*	"To have loosed"
Participle	Aorist	λύσᾱς	*lusas*	"Having loosed" (a very important form)

MIDDLE VOICE

Indicative	Aorist	ἐλῡσάμην	*elusamēn*	"I loosed" (for myself)
Subjunctive	Aorist	λύσωμαι	*lusōmai*	"I (ought) have loosed" (special applications)
Imperative	Aorist	λῦσαι	*lusai*	"Loose! for thyself" (in past sense)
Infinitive	Aorist	λύσασθαι	*lusasthai*	"To have loosed for one's self"
Participle	Aorist	λῡσάμενος	*lusamenos*	"Having loosed for one's self"

PASSIVE VOICE

Indicative	Aorist	ἐλύθην	*eluthēn*	"I (in past time) was loosed"
Subjunctive	Aorist	λυθῶ	*luthō*	"I should/was motivated to have been loosed" (with the understanding that I was)
Imperative	Aorist	λύθητι	*luthēti*	"Be (thou) loosed" (in past time)
Infinitive	Aorist	λυθῆναι	*luthēnai*	"To have been loosed"
Participle	Aorist	λυθείς	*lutheis*	"Having been loosed" (important form)

GREEK VERB SYSTEM: PERFECT

Active Voice				
Indicative	Perfect tense	λέλυκα	*leluka*	"I have loosed"
	Pluperfect tense	ἐλελύκη	*elelukē*	"I had loosed"
Infinitive	Perfect tense	λελυκέναι	*lelukenai*	"To have loosed"
Participle	(verbal noun or adjective)	λελυκῶς	*lelukōs*	"Having loosed"
Middle Voice				
Indicative	Perfect tense	λέλυμαι	*lelumai*	"I have loosed for myself"
	Pluperfect tense	ἐλελύμην	*elelumēn*	"I had loosed for myself"
Infinitive	(Perfect tense)	λελύσθαι	*lelusthai*	"To have loosed for one's self"
Participle	(verbal noun or adjective)	λελυμένος	*lelumenos*	"Having loosed for one's self
Passive Voice				
Indicative	Perfect tense	λέλυμαι	*lelumai*	"I have been loosed"
	Pluperfect tense	ἐλελύμην	*elelumēn*	"I had been loosed"
Indicative	Perfect (Future) tense	λελύσομαι	*lelusomai*	"I shall have been loosed"
Infinitive	Perfect (Future)	λελύσεσθαι	*lelusesthai*	"To have been loosed"
Participle	(verbal noun or adjective)	λελυσόμενος	*lelusomenos*	"Having had been loosed"

GREEK VERB SYSTEM: FUTURE

Active Voice

Indicative	Future tense	λύσω	*lusō*	"I shall loose"
Infinitive	(all inclusive)	λύσειν	*lusein*	"To be about/ prepared to loose"
Participle	(verbal noun or adjective)	λύσων	*lusōn*	"about to loose"

Middle Voice

Indicative	Future tense	λύσομαι	*lusomai*	"I shall loose for myself"
Infinitive	(all inclusive)	λύσεσθαι	*lusesthai*	"To be about/ prepared to loose for one's self"
Participle	(verbal noun or adjective)	λῦσόμενος	*lusomenos*	"about to loose for one's self"

Passive Voice

Indicative	Future tense	λυθήσομαι	*luthēsomai*	"I shall be loosed"
Infinitive	(all inclusive)	λυθήσεσθαι	*luthēsesthai*	"To be about/ prepared to be loosed"
Participle	(verbal noun or adjective)	λυθησόμενος	*luthēsomenos*	"about to be loosed"

Lesson 9 The Study and Interpretation of the Bible

A. Principles of Bible study

We have the wonderful privilege as Christians of being able to understand the Scriptures. This is possible because we have the Holy Spirit as our teacher. We call this **illumination.** It is the indwelling Holy Spirit giving the Christian the ability to understand the Scriptures. This truth is clearly taught in God's Word.

> *"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father."* Matt. 16:17
>
> *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth."* John 16:13
>
> *"But the natural [unsaved] man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* 1 Cor. 2:14

Important Definitions

Revelation—God's ***disclosing*** to man things about Himself that man could not know otherwise.

Inspiration—God's unique **"*breathing*"** of His words into the human writers of Scripture.

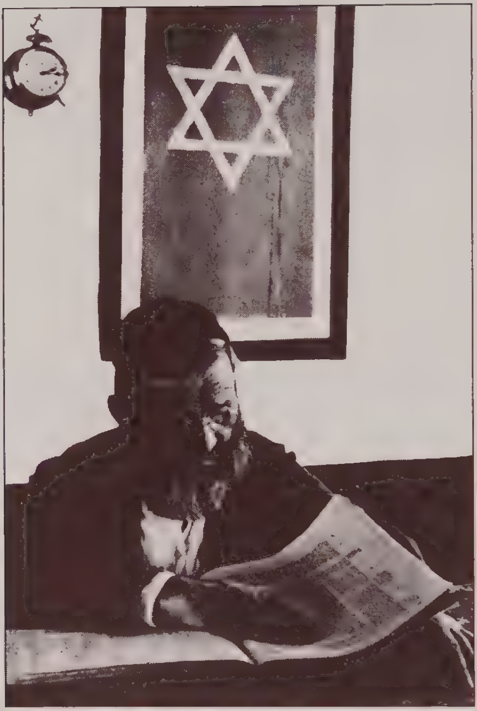
Illumination—God's ***teaching*** the Christian the truths of His Word.

Although we have the Holy Spirit as our teacher, He cannot guide us if we do not read God's Word. The Bible is simple enough so all Christians can understand it. Theologians refer to the ***perspicuity*** [pûr′spĭ•kū′*i*•tĭ] of Scripture, that is, the fact that it is easily understood. Since God gave the Bible to us, it would be worthwhile to learn some principles of Bible study.

1. Be **persistent** in Bible study.

The greatest difficulty for the average Christian in his Bible study is simply faithfulness. One day he may read twenty chapters, and the next day he will not read any chapters. It is no wonder he lives a defeated life. Someone has compared Bible reading to the Old Testament manna. The Christian must gather enough for each day. One cannot "stockpile" his devotions for several days and hope to survive spiritually. He must learn daily to come to God's Word for spiritual nourishment.

There will be days when we will not feel like reading God's Word. At other times the reading will appear dull and uninteresting. The greatest of Christians have gone through times when their Bible



Jewish man in Bible study

reading was not a joyous experience. It was then they learned the lesson of persistence and soon the joy of Bible reading returned.

We are commanded to faithfully read God's Word. Our desire to read or not to read should not affect our regular devotions.

> *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."* Josh. 1:8

The word *meditate* is an interesting word. It means to muse or to ponder, but the intensity of that meditation is what is stressed in Joshua 1:8. The same word in the Hebrew is found in several other places in the Old Testament.

> *"They that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long."* Ps. 38:12

> *"For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief."* Prov. 24:2

The word is compared to an enemy who spends every waking moment plotting his next attack. The stress is on that enemy's attitude. He is obsessed with vengeance. Similarly, God is commanding Joshua to become obsessed with the Word of God. The result will be a "prosperous way" (satisfactory accomplishment of all intended) and "success" (insight into the way God thinks).

2. Make it **personal.**

Each Christian must find a method of Bible study that works best for him. Often we try a pattern that worked for someone else, but we find it doesn't work for us. One man said he read God's Word until his heart burned within him (Luke 24:32). Someone else always reads the same number of chapters each day. Another reads through his Bible every year. Still another said he reads until he ***wants*** to read some more. Often those reading through the Bible become discouraged once they finish the easily read narratives. Find a plan that works best for you. Everyone who is successful at personal Bible study has a plan.

Martin Luther said, "I study my Bible as I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree that the ripest might fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf."

At a normal rate of reading it will take the average Christian 3 hours to read the Gospel of Luke, 4$^1/_2$ hours to read the book of Psalms, 52 hours to read the Old Testament, 19 hours to read the New Testament, and less than 72 hours to read the entire Bible.

3. Let it **purify** you.

It seems that occasionally the reading of Scripture does not result in a specific blessing to the reader. Has anything been accomplished? Many of God's great truths will become a part of our lives without our realizing it. The Bible has the wonderful ability to cleanse our minds and motivate us to think like God Himself. Just as water does not need to be retained in order to cleanse, so the Word of God does not need to be completely retained in order to cleanse our minds of wrong thinking (Ps. 119:9; John 17:17; Eph. 5:26).

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

Read the Bible, not as a newspaper, but as a home letter.

If a cluster of heavenly fruit hangs within reach, gather it.

If a promise lies upon the page as a blank check, cash it.

If a prayer is recorded, appropriate it, and launch it as a feathered arrow from the bow of your desire.

If an example of holiness gleams before you, ask God to do as much for you.

If the truth is revealed in all its intrinsic splendor, entreat that its brilliance may ever irradiate the hemisphere of your life.

—*F. B. Meyer*

B. Principles of Bible interpretation

As we study God's Word, it is important to understand some basic principles of interpretation. These principles will keep us from the foolish mistakes of false religions which twist the Scripture "unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16). Sincere Bible students have formulated six principles to aid us in "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Some of these principles may require the study of Bible commentaries and other sources of information about the Bible. But remember that the Bible is the best commentary on the Bible. Whereas we can appreciate the work of godly men who dedicated their lives to the study of God's Word, these principles are designed to be used by anyone who daily reads God's Word on his own.

1. **Literal** principle

   a. The literal principle teaches that the words of Scripture should be interpreted in a normal, natural, proper way.

   Because the Bible is God's message to mankind, it should not be looked upon in some mystical way. The Bible follows basic literary patterns of interpretation. A verb is still a verb and a noun is still a noun. We should not try to figure out special codes hidden in the letters and spellings of the Biblical language. In this sense the Bible is to be viewed as any other book. It is to be interpreted according to the normal rules of grammar, interpreted as literature.

   The narratives of Scripture are events which actually took place. They are not fables used to teach some higher "moral" or "spiritual" truth. If the Bible says a great fish swallowed Jonah, then that is exactly what it means. If the Bible says Jesus fed 5,000 men with five loaves and two fishes, we take it at its word.

   b. The literal principle does not reject the Bible's use of **figurative language.**

   We realize that any good literature makes abundant use of similes, metaphors, and other figures of speech. But we should never interpret the Bible figuratively unless the Bible clearly indicates the use of nonliteral language.

   > "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense." *—David L. Cooper*

   Jesus Christ said on one occasion, "I am the door." We understand that He was not saying He was a literal door. We accept the fact that this passage should be interpreted "normally" as a picture of what Christ is in salvation: the only "way" to Heaven. A good question to ask as you read the Bible is this:

   If I were reading this passage for the first time without any preconceived ideas, what does this passage seem to be saying?

   Further examples of figurative language that are indicated as such are found in the book of Revelation:

   > *"And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And Power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."* Rev. 6:8

Since Death and Hell cannot actually ride horses, we must conclude that this is figurative language. An excellent rule of interpretation is this: If the literal, normal interpretation of a Bible passage makes good sense, then it is to be taken literally; if the literal does not make good sense, then it is probably symbolic or figurative.

> *"And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."* Rev. 1:16

The "stars" cannot actually be stars because the ***context*** tells us differently. Verse 20 explains that the "stars" are "angels of the seven churches." The Bible will often explain its own symbolism.

> *"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."* Rev. 13:3

> *"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."* Rev. 15:2

Phrases such as "as it were" allow us to assume the expression is like something else and can be interpreted figuratively. But unless the Bible explicitly gives us that right we should not become guilty of interpreting all passages in a figurative, symbolic sense.

2. **Historical** principle

We must be careful to view a passage in its original cultural and historical setting. The more we understand the times of the Bible characters the better we will be able to rightly divide the Word of God.

A good illustration of this is Christ's admonition to his disciples in Luke 10:3–4:

> *"Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way."*

If a person does not understand the culture of Christ's day, he may conclude that this last command ("salute no man") would result in a very rude group of soulwinners. But anyone who has traveled in the countries of Central and South America could explain what Christ meant. "Saluting" is far more than simply saying hello to someone as they pass by. It was an elaborate form of greeting which often involved sitting down with an individual, asking about the welfare of each member of his family and discussing what might appear to an American as "small talk." It is not unusual in these countries for "saluting" to last more than an hour. Christ knew these seventy disciples would not have time to spend an hour with each person they met if they were going to preach to hundreds.

3. **Contextual** principle

   A passage can be correctly interpreted by the correct understanding of the context in which it is found. This includes Old or New Testament, the book itself, the chapter, and the verses before and after the given passage.

   One passage that is occasionally taken out of context is found in Matthew 10:19:

   > *"Take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak."*

   Some preachers have used this passage to justify their lack of sermon preparation. They believe God will give them the message as they stand to speak. But the context reveals that God is giving instructions to those who are brought before "the councils" and the "synagogues." God's promise was for those who were being persecuted not preachers preparing for Sunday.

   Without regard to the context of Scripture it is even possible to say that the Bible teaches "there is no God." But **in context** the Scripture says:

   > *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."* Ps. 14:1

4. **Grammatical** principle

   A passage cannot be fully understood unless the grammar of that passage is understood. Although some knowledge of Hebrew and Greek may be helpful, the grammatical principle also applies to the English syntax.

   A verse that shows the importance of the grammatical method is 1 John 5:18, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not."

   This verse, however, seems to contradict a verse found earlier in the same epistle, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:10).

   This problem can be reconciled by the grammatical principle. The present tense of the verb (sinneth) in 1 John 5:18 indicates a continual or habitual action. It would be perfectly acceptable to interpret the passage to read, "We know that whosoever is born of God doth not habitually commit the same sin." A true Christian cannot continually live in sin without being chastised by his heavenly Father.

5. **Synthetical** principle

   We must always interpret a verse of Scripture in the light of other passages of Scripture. The obscure passage should always be interpreted in the light of clear passages dealing with the same subject. It should be obvious that a verse that seems to teach that salvation is by works should be considered in the light of many verses that indicate salvation is by grace.

   The cults have become masters of taking one verse out of context and making it a pretext for false doctrine. It is never good Biblical exposition to base any doctrine on one isolated verse. When we do, we begin to interpret the Bible in a highly subjective manner.

6. **Practical** principle

   We must ask ourselves the question: "What does this passage mean to me today?" We must view the Bible as more than an account of what God has done in the past. We need to ask the Lord daily to speak to our hearts through His Word.

With these six principles in mind the student of God's Word will not be guilty of misinterpreting Scripture.

> *"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."* 2 Cor. 2:17
>
> *"But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully."* 2 Cor. 4:2

HOW TO DEAL WITH BIBLE DIFFICULTIES

Although there is much of the Bible we can understand, there will still be sections that will cause difficulty. We may find Scripture that is still confusing to us, or someone may point out some *alleged* contradiction. We can still have faith in a perfect book. God has allowed these difficulties to remain in His Word in order to supply targets for the ungodly arrows of the hardened skeptic. Because of the skeptics of the first century, Jesus spoke in parables (Matt. 13:13–15). Parables not only revealed truth to the tender-hearted believer but also concealed truth from the hardened unbeliever. Scriptural difficulties are simply mysteries to be revealed only to the diligent, receptive student of God's Word.

I. Approach the Bible with complete confidence in the Author.

A. Trust in the fact that since God wrote it, it speaks the truth.

B. Put your trust in the Author instead of your logic and reason.

II. Realize that you will not understand all of the Bible. (Rom. 11:33–36)

> *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."* Isa. 55:8, 9

A. When you take the infinite mind of God and bring it down to the finite mind of man, you will have difficulties.

B. God enjoys hiding some things from us. If we could understand it all, we would be gods.

III. Remember, there are those who want to destroy your confidence in the Bible.

A. Find out the motive of the one bringing up the difficulty.

B. You are wasting your time trying to solve a problem with someone who does not sincerely want to know the truth.

IV. Remember that a difficulty in understanding a doctrine or a grave objection to a doctrine, does not in any way prove the doctrine to be untrue.

A. You must weigh all the Scriptures together.

B. What does the major book on that subject (or doctrine) say? Examples are:

   1. Salvation—Romans
   2. Pastoral requirements—1 and 2 Timothy
   3. Joy—Philippians
   4. Leadership—Nehemiah
   5. Miracles of Christ—Gospels

C. Remember that because you do not know the answer to a Bible difficulty does not mean there is not an answer.

"He is a shallow thinker who gives up on a truth because there are some apparent facts he cannot reconcile."

V. Take an offensive approach.

A. You do not always have to prove your difficulties; try to disprove your beliefs.

B. We do not always have to "defend" the faith. Let someone else prove their assertions.

VI. Difficulties are usually minimal compared to the weight of proof.

A. The many proofs of it will help you in the few difficulties **you** cannot seem to reconcile.

B. Do not follow the skeptics in spending more time on difficulties than on truths.

VII. Difficulties rapidly disappear upon careful and prayerful study.

A. The more we pray and truly study, the fewer difficulties we will find. (James 1:5)

B. Most of our difficulties occur from our biased opinions rather than studying what the Scriptures say.

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

R. A. Torrey

Dr. R. A. Torrey, for many years the associate to the great evangelist Dwight L. Moody, was one of the great Christian leaders of his era. He wrote many books regarding the fundamentals of the Christian faith. He listed the following principles for understanding the Bible.

Paul warns against "handling the Word of God deceitfully (dishonestly)," 2 Corinthians 4:2. He further commands us in 2 Timothy 2:15 to "rightly divide" the Word of God. This is critical for proper interpretation.

1. Get absolutely right with God yourself by the absolute surrender of your will to Him.
2. Be determined to find out just what God intended to teach and not what you wish Him to teach.
3. Get the most accurate text.
4. Find the most exact and literal meaning of the text.
5. Note the exact force of each word used.
6. Interpret the words used in any verse according to Bible usage.
7. Interpret the words of each author in the Bible with a regard to the particular usage of that author.
8. Interpret individual verses with a regard to the context.
9. Interpret individual passages in the light of parallel or related passages.
10. Interpret obscure passages in the light of passages that are perfectly plain.
11. Interpret any passage in the Bible as those who were addressed would have understood it.
12. Interpret what belongs to the Christian as belonging to the Christian; what belongs to the Jew, as belonging to the Jew; and what belongs to the Gentiles, as belonging to the Gentiles.
13. Interpret each writer with a view to the opinions the writer opposed.
14. Interpret poetry as poetry and interpret prose as prose.
15. The Holy Spirit is the best interpreter of the Bible.

—from *R. A. Torrey*
The Importance and Value of Proper Bible Study
(New York: George H. Doran Co., 1921), pp. 55–90.

THIS BOOK CONTAINS:

The mind of God,
The state of man,
The way of salvation,
The doom of sinners,
And the happiness of believers.

Read it to be wise,
Believe it to be safe,
Practice it to be holy.
It contains light to direct you,
Food to support you,
Comfort to cheer you.

It is a traveler's map
The pilgrim's staff,
The pilot's compass,
The soldier's sword,
And the Christian's charter.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully.
It is a mine of wealth,
A paradise of glory,
And a river of pleasure.

It involves the highest responsibility,
Rewards the greatest labor,
and condemns all who
Trifle with its Holy contents.

—Selected

◆

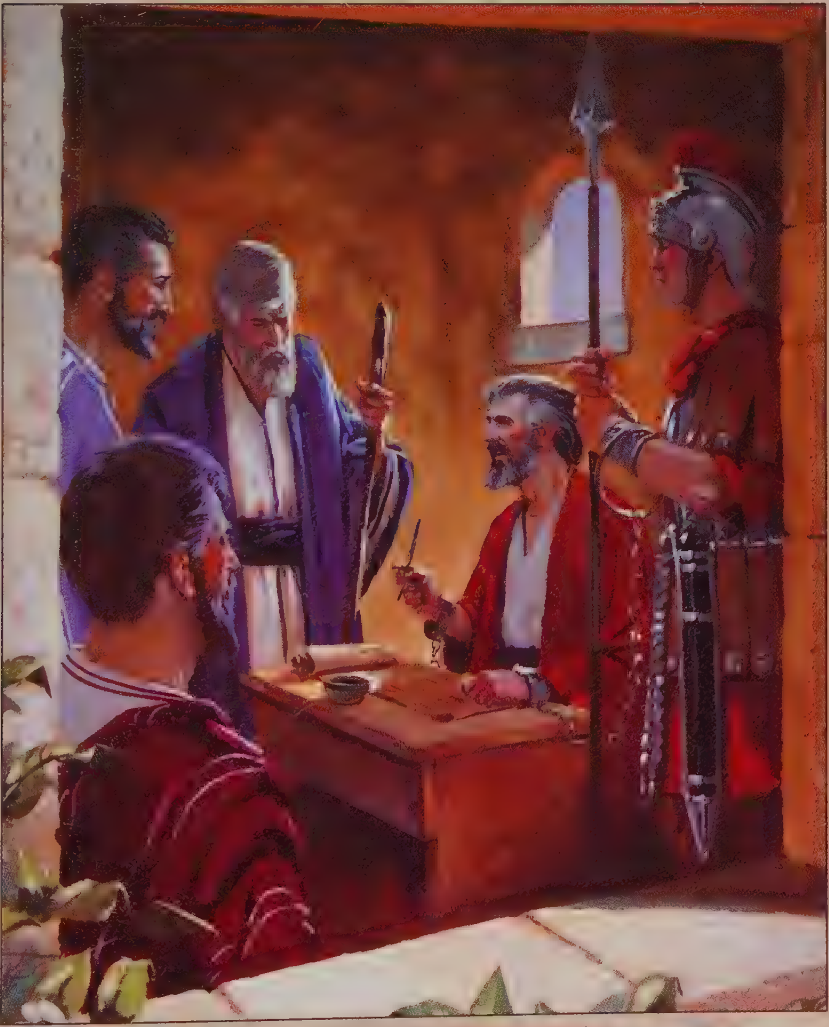
READ YOUR BIBLE

- Slowly, with mind alert.
- Carefully and with prayer.
- Expectantly and with anticipation.
- In a spirit of enjoyment.
- Eager to respond inwardly.
- Seeking a personal message.
- Repeating aloud verses which strike fire.
- Keeping a definite time each day for reading.
- Copying out a key verse to carry with you for re-reading through the day.

—Selected

The Preservation of God's Word

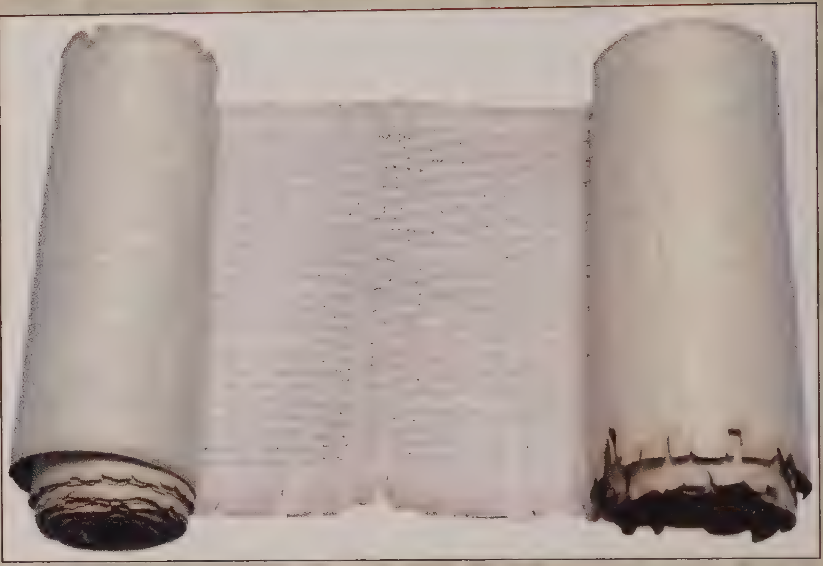
God gave His Word through 40 different men over 1,500 years in 3 different languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. God preserved the Bible down through the centuries through dedicated copyists who meticulously copied it by hand. God's Word was preserved both in manuscript form and in the early commentaries on the Bible. Further, the Bible was preserved through its translation into the languages of the common people. Thus today people over much of the globe have the wonderful privilege of reading with understanding God's Word to mankind.



©1987 Pensacola Christian College

The apostle Paul wrote inspired letters in prison.

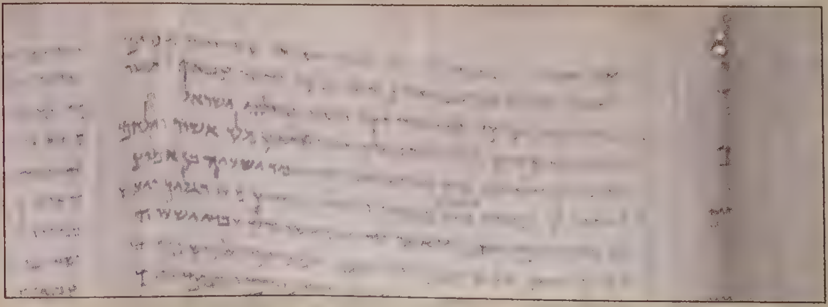
THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS, *100 B.C.*



reproduction of Isaiah scroll (see inset below)

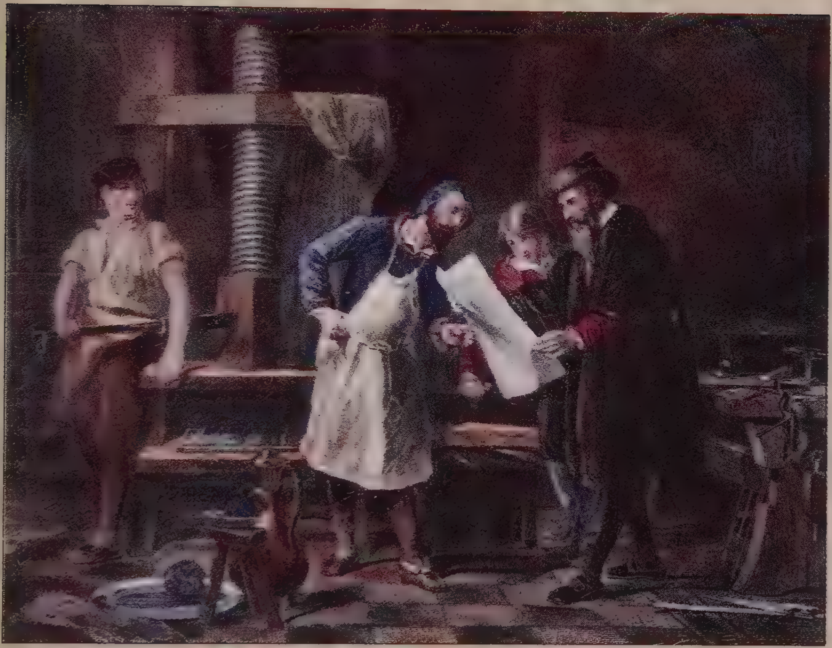
In 1947, one of the first scrolls to be discovered in the **Qumran caves near the Dead Sea** was a complete scroll of Isaiah. It is approximately one foot wide and twenty-four feet in length. Even though it is older than the medieval manuscript of Isaiah by one thousand years, a comparison of these two ancient manuscripts reveals the accuracy with which God's Word was copied during those one thousand years.

The photographs on this page are of a reproduction of the original Isaiah scroll, accurately reproduced to the last hole and tear. The manuscript was written in columns without any of our modern chapter or verse divisions. The Isaiah scroll has been dated at about 100 B.C.



All of the Bibles pictured in this section are from the Biblical Archives of Pensacola Christian College.

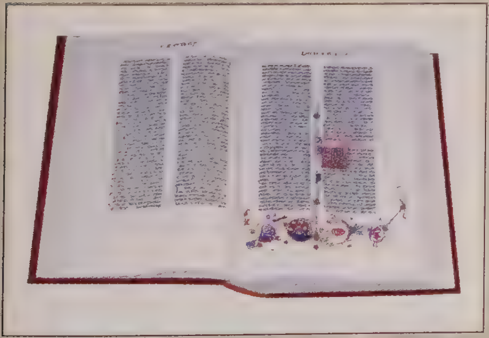
THE GUTENBERG BIBLE, *A.D. 1456*
(*LATIN VULGATE*)



The Granger Collection, New York

Gutenberg reviewing the first proof of his printed Bible

When **Johann Gutenberg** invented his movable-type printing press, he determined it would be used to produce Bibles for the masses. In 1456, he produced the **first printed edition of the Bible.** This book, one of the first books to be printed in Europe, is often called the *Gutenberg Bible.* All of the ornate letters had to be initially made by hand and then arranged in the proper order for printing.

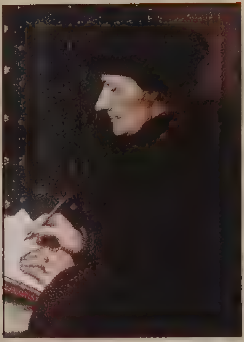


Gutenberg's Bible, the Latin Vulgate

"God suffers because there are such multitudes of souls to whom His sacred Word cannot be given. Religious truth is captive in a small number of little manuscripts, which guard the common treasures instead of expanding them. Let us break the seal which binds these holy things; let us give wings to truth that it may fly with the Word, no longer prepared at vast expense, but multitudes everlastingly by a machine which never wearies—to every soul which enters life!"

—*Johann Gutenberg*, c. 1400–1468

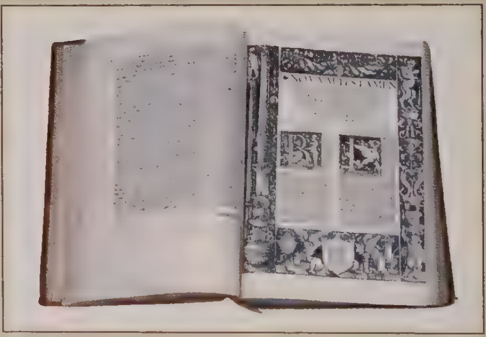
Erasmus's Greek Text of the New Testament, *1516* (*Textus Receptus*)


The Granger Collection, New York

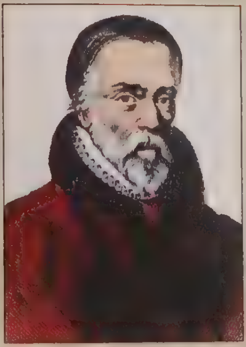
Erasmus

The great European scholar **Erasmus** believed one of his greatest accomplishments to be his publishing of the New Testament in Greek in 1516. He did this by studying the best manuscripts available of the different New Testament books and printing them in one volume. His goal was to make it as easy as possible for the student of God's Word to study the New Testament in the original Greek language. Erasmus's printed Greek text was called the **Textus Receptus** (Latin) because it was the "text received" or accepted by Christians. In his second edition of 1519, he included two parallel columns on each page, the left in Greek and the right in Latin.

> *"These holy pages will summon up the living image of His mind. They will give you Christ Himself, talking, healing, dying, rising, the whole Christ in a word; they will give Him to you in an intimacy so close that He would be less visible to you if He stood before your very eyes."* —*Erasmus*

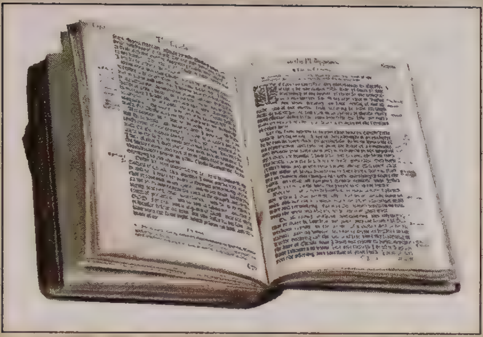

Erasmus's 1519 Greek and Latin parallel New Testament

William Tyndale's New Testament, *1526*


The Bettman Archive/BBC Hulton

William Tyndale

In 1382, *John Wycliffe* and his followers translated the Latin Vulgate into the English language and made many copies of it by hand. About 150 years later, **William Tyndale** desired to give the English-speaking people a **printed** Bible translated from the original Hebrew and Greek. In 1526 the first edition of his English New Testament was printed, based largely on the Greek text of Erasmus (*Textus Receptus*). **Tyndale was burned at the stake for his work** in translating the Scriptures into the common language of the English people.



Tyndale's 1566 edition
English New Testament

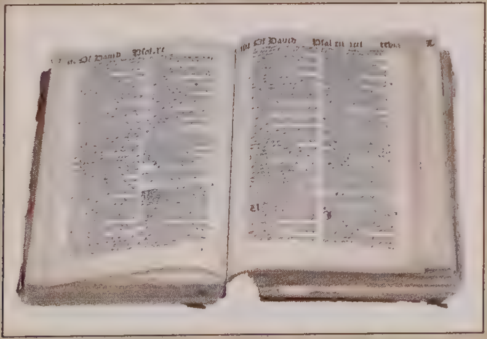
"If God spare my life ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the scripture than thou doest."
—*William Tyndale* (to one of his critics)

It has been estimated that as much as 90 percent of our present English Bible was the work of William Tyndale. This similarity is especially obvious in Philippians 2:9–11 of this 1566 edition of Tyndale's New Testament:

"Wherefore, God hath exalted hym, and geven hym a name above all names: that in the name of Jesus, should every knee bowe, both of thinges in heaven, and thinges in earth, and thinges under the earth, and that all tongues shoulde confesse, that Jesus Christe is the Lorde, unto the prayse of God the father."

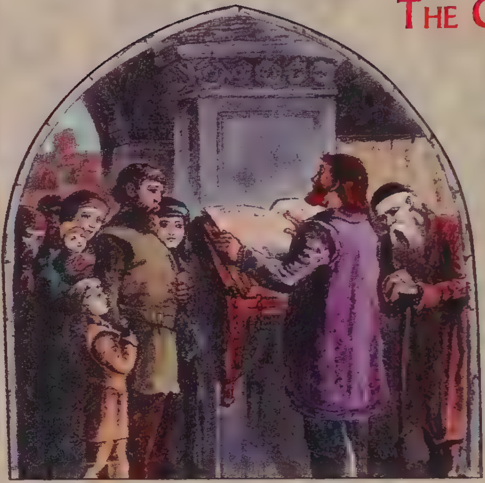
THE MATTHEWS BIBLE, *1537*

Thomas Matthews was a pseudonym for John Rogers, a personal friend of William Tyndale. The Matthews Bible is basically Tyndale's New Testament and the half of the Old Testament Tyndale was able to finish before he was martyred in 1536. With a knowledge of Tyndale's preparation for the remainder of the Old Testament and a version translated by *Miles Coverdale,* Rogers was able to complete his Bible in 1537.

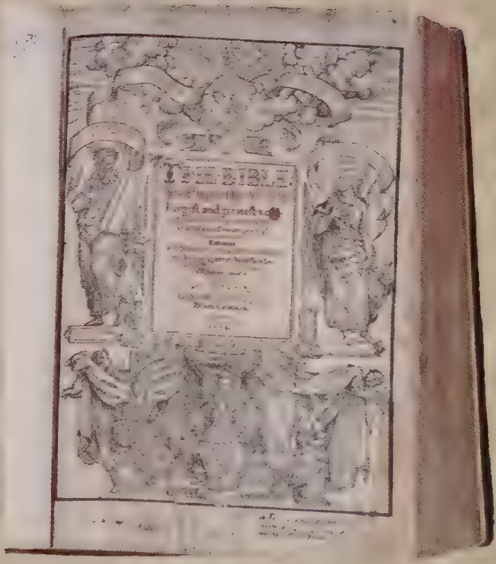


John Rogers's 1537
Matthews Bible

THE GREAT BIBLE, *1539*



Miles Coverdale superintended the printing of the Great Bible of 1539, which was so named because of its volume and elegance. King Henry VIII ordered copies of this Bible to be chained to the pulpits of all the churches in England. People would gather around the pulpits every day to hear the reading of God's Word. The Bible became so popular that people spent more time reading and discussing it than working. As a result, regulations were passed to limit its discussion. This 1566 edition shows Queen Elizabeth I on the title page.



The Great Bible
Above: Chained to a pulpit
Left: 1566 edition title page

THE GENEVA BIBLE, *1560*

The Bible used by William Shakespeare, John Bunyan, and the Puritans was the Geneva Bible of 1560. When the Pilgrims sailed to America, the Geneva Bible was their most prized possession.

The small size of the first edition of the Geneva Bible made it very popular with the people. It was easily carried, and its yellow paper made it easy to read by candlelight. The Geneva Bible was also one of the first to use verse divisions within the chapters.

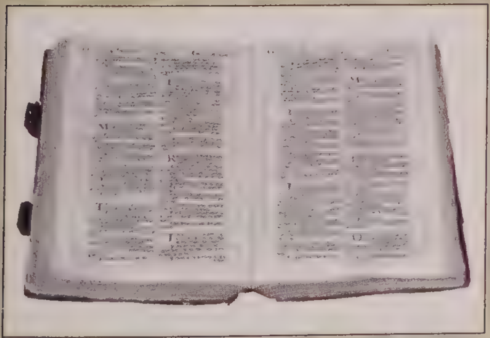
"Here is the spring where waters flowe,
to quench our heate of sinne:
Here is the tree where trueth doth growe,
to leade our lives therein:
"The tidings of salvation deare,
comes to our eares from hence:
The fortresse of our faith is here,
and shield of our defence."
—from the preface to the
1583 edition of the Geneva Bible

Above: Geneva Bible of 1560—Bible of the Pilgrims

Collection of the New York Historical Society

AUTHORIZED VERSION, *1611*
(*KING JAMES BIBLE*)

In 1604, King James VI appointed six groups of men, scholars in the original languages and masters of literary style, to make a new translation of the Bible into English from the original Hebrew and Greek. "Fearing no reproach for slowness," they completed their work in 1611. The King James Version has been used by English-speaking missionaries to take the gospel around the globe and has never been excelled in language and style.



1611 Authorized Version

THE BIBLE TO THE WORLD

Since 1611, and especially in the 20th century, many translations of the Bible have been made into most of the world's languages, as well as numerous versions and paraphrases. By 1980, 95.8 percent of the world's peoples had the Scriptures, in whole or in part, in their own language. The Bible, in whole or in part, had been translated into 1,811 distinct languages—148 European languages, 54 within the Soviet Union, 526 in Africa, 457 in Asia, 266 in Oceania, and 360 in the Americas. Of these 1,811 languages, 759 had a complete New Testament and 276 the entire Bible. This contrasts markedly with what was available in 1900, when only 537 languages had Scriptures, in whole or in part. As the 19th century was the century of missions, so the 20th century was the era of translations.

PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW BIBLE VERSION TRANSLATIONS

Unfortunately, most of the English translations made in the 20th century are derived from a minority of inferior manuscripts which delete or change words and verses, and even omit a few passages of Scripture, violating Revelation 22:18–19. These problems can be traced to two liberal textual critics of the Bible, Westcott and Hort, who made a new Greek text of the New Testament in the 1880s. Rejecting the accepted Majority family of Greek text manuscripts, which had been used for centuries, Westcott and Hort assembled various inferior, less credible manuscripts to produce a *new* Greek text that had not previously existed.

Several new translations were made from the Westcott-Hort text over the years, but through the first half of the 20th century believers held fast to the trustworthy Authorized King James Version. By the 1960s, however, many people had begun to use new versions based on the Westcott-Hort text. Today, the majority of versions in use, including the New American Standard Version and New International Version, are based upon revisions of the Westcott-Hort text (Nestles/Aland). However, the Authorized Version (KJV) continues to be the most accurate version because it is translated from the Majority Text family of manuscripts.

CHAPTER 2

THIRTY NINE
OLD TESTAMENT
BOOKS
HISTORY
LAW
POETRY
MAJOR PROPHETS
MINOR PROPHETS
TWENTY SEVEN
NEW TESTAMENT
BOOKS
LIFE OF CHRIST
STORY OF THE CHURCH
EPISTLES AND LETTERS
PROPHECY

Theology

THE STUDY OF GOD

Lesson

10 The Existence of God

The word *theology* comes from two Greek words, ***theos,*** meaning "God," and ***logos,*** meaning "word" or "doctrine." In a broad sense the word *theology* means the entire study of Bible doctrine, the study of the Creator and His creation. In a more narrow sense it refers to the study of the doctrine of God, His attributes and works. It is in the latter sense that this chapter will study who God is, what God has done in the past, and what He is doing today.

A. Assumptions of God's existence

1. There is a God. (Gen. 1:1)

   God does not argue for His existence. He expects us to accept the fact that He exists. He simply started His Word with the phrase, "In the beginning God. . . . "

2. God has revealed Himself to man through His Word. (Heb. 1:1–3)

   We must accept (by faith) that God has given us His Word. Without it we would not know how to be saved nor how to have fellowship with Him as Christians. Apart from God's revelation, man drifts along in a meaningless existence that has no purpose and no goals.

B. Proofs of God's existence

To the one who says, "Prove that there **is** a God," we can reply, "Prove that there is **no** God." To prove that there is no God, one would have to go to every corner of the universe and look under every rock to show that He is not there. But while that person was looking for God on one planet, God may be on another. Therefore it would be necessary for the individual to be everywhere at the same time. Hence in his desire to prove that there is no God, he himself must possess one of the characteristics of God—omnipresence.

1. **Intuition**

   It is natural for man to believe that there is a God. The abnormal mind is the only kind that cannot accept the fact of God's existence.

   > *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."* Ps. 14:1

> *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."* James 2:19
>
> "All the evidence points to the conclusive fact that this universal faith in the existence of God is innate in man, and comes from rational intuition."
> —*William Evans*

2. **Tradition**

   It has been the common characteristic of all peoples throughout history to believe that there is a God and a life after death. History proves that man is basically a religious creature. After a detailed study of some of the remote tribes of Africa, David Livingstone concluded that all people have a conception of God which they have passed on from generation to generation.

3. **Reason**

   By looking around us it seems obvious to us that Someone with intelligence created, ordered, and organized this marvelous universe.

   > *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."* Rom. 1:20

   a. **Cause and effect**

      Man's observations of this world confirm a marvelous "effect." His rationale demands a cause. What is the Cause behind all that man can see? Surely it must be an omnipotent Creator.

   b. **Design and Designer**

      It is extremely doubtful that man will ever be able to create life. But what if God allowed man to have that privilege? What would it prove? Only that **intelligence** is required to create and order this world. Design demands a Designer.

      > *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."* Ps. 19:1
      >
      > *"For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God."* Heb. 3:4

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD FITS THE FACTS

"Belief in a self-existent, personal God is in harmony with all the facts of our mental and moral nature, as well as with all the phenomena of the natural world. If God exists, a universal belief in his existence is natural enough; the irresistible impulse to ask for a first cause is accounted for; our religious nature has an object; the uniformity of natural law finds an adequate explanation, and human history is vindicated from the charge of being a vast imposture. Atheism leaves all these matters without an explanation, and makes, not history alone, but our moral and intellectual nature itself, an imposture and a lie." —*F. L. Patton*

God's awe-inspiring design in the night sky

DESIGN IN THE HEAVENS

"In the order of the universe, the sun is an ordinary, medium-sized star. Yet its energy and violence almost defy imagination.

"It is a dense mass of glowing matter, a million times the volume of the earth, and in a permanent state of nuclear activity. Every second, 4 million tons of hydrogen are destroyed in explosions that start somewhere near the core, where the temperature is about 55 million degrees Fahrenheit.

"More energy than man has used since the dawn of civilization is radiated by this normal star in a second.

"The earth's entire oil, coal, and wood reserves would fuel the sun's energy output to the earth alone for only a few days.

"Tongues of hydrogen flame leap from the sun's surface with the force of a billion hydrogen bombs. They are forced up by the enormous thermonuclear explosion at the core of the sun, where 564 million tons of hydrogen fuse each second to form helium. . . .

"The sun . . . is like a vast hydrogen bomb, burning slowly. It is only its vast size that makes its energy output so phenomenal. In fact, its output is about one-fifth that of the human body—in relation to volume." —Reprinted by permission from *Strange Stories, Amazing Facts,* copyright © 1976 The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.

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"The heat of the sun is so great that a body of solid ice as large as our earth would be melted within two hours if the sun came closer to the earth, and if the earth itself would fall into the sun it would be completely vaporized in a matter of minutes.

"The distance between the earth and the sun is 93,000,000 miles. Astronomers have estimated that if this distance were increased to 120,000,000 miles instead of the 93,000,000, our planet would be a perpetual frozen Arctic, and life on it would be impossible.

"If, on the other hand, this distance were reduced to about 60,000,000 miles, the surface of the earth would be a glowing furnace, again making life on it impossible. But the wonder is that this ball of fire of incalculable heat is exactly 93,000,000 miles away, the exact distance to provide the earth with a balanced amount of heat and light to make life in all its forms possible, and also to divide the earth into climatic zones to make variation in plant and animal life possible. Here again we notice the perfect balance in nature, even among these remote heavenly bodies, and the perfect balance has been maintained with mathematical precision ever since this cosmic machine was set in motion.

"There is no rational explanation for this supreme engineering achievement without a supreme, intelligent, and master Builder." —Reprinted by permission from *The Wonders of Creation* by Alfred M. Rehwinkel, published and copyright 1974 Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN 55438.

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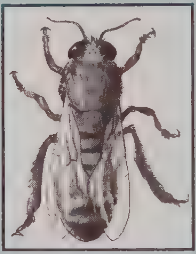
"Can any sane person believe all this array of stars and the vast celestial adornment could have been created out of atoms rushing to and fro fortuitously and at random? Could any other being devoid of intelligence and reason have created them? Not merely did their creation postulate intelligence, but it is impossible to understand their nature without intelligence of a high order. . . .

"If any man is not impressed by this coordination of things and this harmonious combination of nature to secure the preservation of the world I know for certain that he has never given any consideration to these matters." *—Cicero*

> *"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"* Ps. 8:3–4

DESIGN IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM*


Honeybee

"In its structure and anatomy, **the bee** is a most wonderful little creature. Its head is equipped with two multiple eyes, like those of the fly. Besides the eye, it has two rod-like projections on the head which serve as a sense organ for touch and for smell. Each rod is again supplied with countless microscopic sense receptors by which the bee receives the sensory stimuli. Its feet are shod with sharp claws, which enable it to walk over rough surfaces; and in between the claws are attached suction pads which make it possible for it to walk on glass or any smooth surface, or even to hold itself in an upside down position on the ceiling. On its hind legs are attached little basket-like devices in which it carries the pollen gathered from the flowers for food to share with the rest of the colony. But while the bee gathers the pollen for food, it also carries it from flower to flower, and thereby performs a most important service by fertilizing the flower, thus making full development possible.

"The wings of the bees are amazingly efficient and powerful, moving at an incredible speed of 75 beats a second, and they are so constructed that the bee can move either up or down or sideways or even hover motionless over a flower or any other object.

"Perhaps the most remarkable fact about this little insect is its ability to make honey from the nectar it gathers from flowers. This honey is the sweetest substance in the world. And when we add to this its skill as a builder of the wax cells to store honey and its unique ability to manufacture its own building materials, the wax from which the cells are made, and its uncanny sense of direction which enables it to go far afield to gather nectar, and yet always find its way back in the shortest and straightest line possible, we again are overawed by the wisdom and the goodness of the Creator who designed this little insect and assigned to it its task of producing honey for man's enjoyment."

◆

"The silk of **the spider** is produced in a specialized gland in its body. Minute ducts called 'spinnerets' lead from the gland to the rear part of the spider, to carry its secretion to the surface where, exposed to the air, it becomes a silken thread. These threads are finer than human hair, yet they are many times stronger than steel and elastic like rubber bands. In an experiment it was found that a rope, one inch thick, woven of spider webs was stronger than a rope of the same thickness made of steel wire!"

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DESIGN IN THE HUMAN BODY*

"Engineers have never devised a machine to equal [God's] supreme achievement: the human body. Athletes can sprint at almost 25 miles per hour, throw a ball at more than 100 miles per hour, high jump over seven feet. But even our everyday activities are powered by a system that, in its complexity and efficiency, would make the most sophisticated robot seem inadequate.

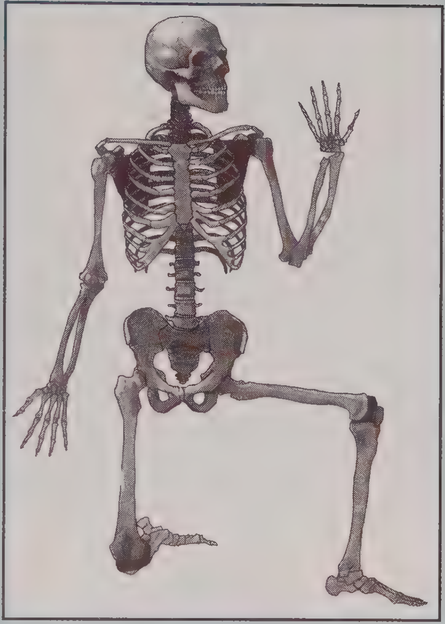
"Take the circulatory system. Every minute of our lives the heart pumps 10 pints of blood—30 pints during brisk exercise—through about 60,000 miles of arteries, veins, and capillaries. An adult body contains between 8 and 10 pints of blood: The average for a man is about 10 pints, containing 25 trillion red cells (to carry oxygen) and 25 billion white cells (to fight disease). Some white cells have a life cycle of only 12 hours; red cells have a life of about 120 days.

"The capillaries—tiny tubes servicing the bloodstream—have a total surface area that would cover a $1^1/_2$-acre field. Not all are opened at once; otherwise all the blood in the body would drain into them within seconds, like floodwater into a swamp. Instead, local chemical changes and nerves to the muscular portion of microscopic blood vessels operate to maintain a cycle of opening and closing every few minutes.

"One part of the body that needs blood all the time is the lungs. Their capillaries continuously take up oxygen from the tiny air sacs of the lungs, while releasing excess carbon dioxide.

* * *

"A baby is born with 305 bones, but some of these fuse together later until there are about 206 (though the number can vary), operated by 650 muscles and more than 100 joints. The tendons anchoring muscle to bone are strong enough to stand a stress of eight tons per square inch, and the thigh bones take a strain of half a ton per square inch while walking.



human skeleton

"All this wonderful complex of [God's creation] is encased in a flexible, waterproof covering,—the skin. The average man has 20 square feet of it, which wears away and is replaced every few weeks. Set in the skin are up to 5 million hairs; each lasts about three years.

"Nine thousand taste buds come to our aid in choosing what we like, aided by millions of nerve cells; 4 million 'receptors' in the skin enable us to feel, distinguish hot from cold, and experience pain or comfort."

> *"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"*
>
> Ps. 139:14–17

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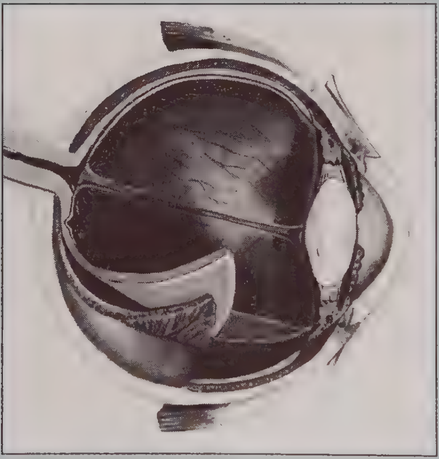
ON UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Isaac Newton

"Can it be by accident that all birds, beasts, and men have their right side and left side alike shaped (except in their bowels); and just two eyes, and no more, on either side of the face; and just two ears on either side [of] the head; and a nose with two holes; and either two forelegs or two wings or two arms on the shoulders, and two legs on the hips, and no more? Whence arises this uniformity in all their outward shapes but from the counsel and contrivance of an Author? Whence is it that the eyes of all sorts of living creatures are transparent to the very bottom, and the only transparent members in the body, having on the outside a hard transparent skin and within transparent humors, with a crystalline lens in the middle and a pupil before the lens, all of them so finely shaped and fitted for vision that no artist can mend them? Did blind chance know that there was light and what was its refraction, and fit the eyes of all creatures after the most curious manner to make use of it? These and suchlike considerations always have and ever will prevail with mankind to believe that there is a Being who made all things and has all things in his power, and who is therefore to be feared. . . ."

—*Sir Isaac Newton* (1642–1727),
from *Newton's Philosophy of Nature: Selections from His Writings*, H. S. Thayer, ed. (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1953).



cross section of the human eye

Lesson

11 How God Reveals Himself

Revelation is God's disclosing to man things about Himself that man could not know otherwise. The revelation of God to mankind is divided into two sections: **general revelation** and **special revelation.** General revelation is God's revelation of Himself in creation, through history, and in a man's conscience. Special revelation is God's revelation in His Word and through His Son Jesus Christ. Without revelation we would know nothing about God.

A. General revelation

1. Definition

God reveals Himself to all mankind through the glories of His creation and His government of the universe.

HOW GOD MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO US

We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most beautiful book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many letters leading us to perceive clearly the invisible qualities of God, namely, **His eternal power and deity,** as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20. —Article 2 of the Belgic Confession of Faith (A.D. 1561)

a. General revelation is **seen in nature** by all men.

> *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."* Ps. 19:1
>
> *"We . . . preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered [allowed] all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."* Acts 14:15–17
>
> *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."* Rom. 1:20

b. General revelation **sees God as Creator and Governor.**

The theme of the book of Daniel is the rule of God over all. Each of the Babylonian kings came face to face with this great thought—"God rules over all." Whether these men accepted God's plan of salvation is unclear, but some at least took the first step by accepting general revelation.

(1) Nebuchadnezzar

> *"To the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."* Dan. 4:17

> *"The most high ruleth in the kingdom of men."* Dan. 4:25

> *"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation."* Dan. 4:34

> *"He doeth according to his will . . . and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"* Dan. 4:35

> *"And he [Nebuchadnezzar] was driven from the sons of men . . . till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will."* Dan. 5:21

(2) Belshazzar

> *"The God in whose hand thy [Belshazzar's] breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified."*
> (Daniel speaking to Belshazzar in Dan. 5:23)

> *The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.* Dan. 4:25

(3) Darius

> *"I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end."* Dan. 6:26

c. General revelation **renders sinful man without excuse.**

> *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."* Rom. 1:20

d. General revelation is **insufficient for saving knowledge.**

Although general revelation may lead an individual in the direction of salvation (like the kings of Babylon), it is still not enough to teach an individual the way of salvation.

A good illustration of this truth is the New Testament account of the conversion of Cornelius.

> *"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, . . . A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."* Acts 10:1–2

Cornelius was very religious, very moral, but he was unsaved. He had accepted general revelation, but he needed the truth of the gospel presented by God's man. God appeared to Simon Peter by means of a vision. Peter was instructed to give the gospel to Cornelius. Cornelius could not be saved until he was able to "hear words" from Peter. Yet when he heard the gospel, he immediately accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

Many people are open to the gospel message and are waiting to hear the "good news" of salvation. Jesus said that the fields are white unto harvest but the laborers are few. The Lord seems to have more trouble getting His children to fulfill the Great Commission than He has in opening the hearts of the unsaved.

2. **Need for general revelation**

   a. It saves the world from chaos and cruelty.

   God has provided **three channels of general revelation** for mankind. They are

   (1) Nature (Ps. 8:3–5; 19:1–6; Acts 14:15–17; Rom. 1:19–25)

   "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Ps. 8:3–4

   (2) Conscience (Rom. 2:14–15)

   "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." Rom. 2:14–15

   (3) History (Deut. 28; Prov. 14:34)

   "The Lord shall establish thee [the Hebrew nation] an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee." Deut. 28:9–10, 15, 37

   "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14:34

   It is through these three channels that God gives to man some sense of morality. The world system realizes that sin needs to be punished. It also understands that order is necessary for a nation or society to survive. Although morality will not save anyone, it does keep a nation from total chaos. General revelation is helpful, but it is still insufficient for salvation.

   b. It supports and illustrates special revelation (God's Word).

   The glories of God's creation are constant reminders of a Supreme Being. The design of this universe demands that reasoning man recognize a Designer. The wonders of the human body cannot be explained apart from God. We would expect that a God that is powerful and wonderful enough to create all things would communicate with His creation; therefore general revelation encourages man to seek special revelation.

General revelation and special revelation are like God's two "books," His outdoor book (creation) and His indoor Book (the Bible). His outdoor book can be read by all; if it does not lead people to Him, they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20). Sometimes God's outdoor book leads men to seek after God. God promises to reward the one who diligently seeks Him (Heb. 11:6). He will see to it that true seekers are given the truth revealed in His indoor Book, the Bible. If a man is willing to accept the truth of God's outdoor book, God will see to it that he finds the truth of God's indoor Book, the Bible.

This universe and its laws also **illustrate** truths that we see in God's Word. The unending universe is a physical illustration of eternity. The world of science is filled with paradoxes. The physicist indicates that there are two mutually exclusive theories of light. Although it appears that they cannot both be true, yet they are. This paradox is an illustration of God's revelation.

> *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."* Isa. 55:8–9

C. H. Spurgeon

Charles Spurgeon, called by many the Prince of Preachers, once said when asked to reconcile two paradoxical truths of Scripture: "They need no reconciliation, for they never fell out. Why should I reconcile two friends? Prove to me that the two truths do not agree. These two facts are parallel lines; I cannot make them unite, but you cannot make them cross each other. Permit me also to add that I have long ago given up the idea of making all my beliefs into a system. I believe, but I cannot explain. I fall before the majesty of revelation, and adore the infinite Lord."

B. Special revelation

1. Definition

Special revelation is the act of God whereby He reveals Himself and His truth to specific people at specific times and places. Yet the revelation was not for those people alone; God revealed Himself to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses, and yet what they learned of God has been recorded for all ages.

a. Special revelation **cannot be learned on one's own.**

The unsaved man cannot appreciate God's revelation as seen in God's Word. He is considered a "natural man" by God.

> *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned [understood]."* 1 Cor. 2:14

Apart from the Holy Spirit, an individual will never understand the Bible. Therefore, it is useless to argue with someone about Bible doctrine. The Christian and the unsaved have no common ground. Not until an unsaved individual accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior will he begin to understand God's special revelation. At that moment the Holy Spirit becomes his Teacher.

b. Special revelation **is accepted by faith.**

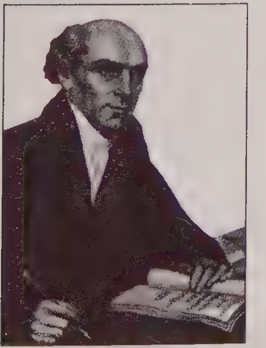
> *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Rom. 10:17

Although reason can tell a man there must be a God, faith is required for salvation. The only way an individual can understand what Jesus Christ has done is through God's Word. Faith is always determined by its object. If the object of one's faith is man, it is a weak faith, because man is weak. But if the object of one's faith is Jesus Christ, that faith is strong, because God's Son is all-powerful.

c. Special revelation **is sufficient for salvation.**

The Word of God contains the gospel, which is all that is necessary for a person to be saved. The great concern is that so many have not heard the gospel story. Even if a person has accepted general revelation, he must be presented with the claims of the gospel before he can be saved. This was the heart cry of Paul as he wrote Romans 10:13–15.

> *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"* Rom. 10:13–15


William Carey

William Carey is considered the Father of Modern Missions. In 1792 he went before his brethren to plead his cause for worldwide missions. The moderator of the meeting replied: "Sit down, young man. Sit down. When God sees fit to convert the heathen, He'll do it without your help or mine." But Carey believed that God would have him go to India. As a result he built schools and a Bible college in the Danish colony of Serampore, India. From there he sent out his preachers into all of India with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"How shall they hear without a preacher?"

Adoniram Judson

In 1813, the first American missionary, **Adoniram Judson,** began working as a missionary in Burma. In spite of the fact that he did not have one convert for the first six years of his ministry, he would not quit. During the war between England and the Burmese (1824–1826), Adoniram Judson was thrown into a filthy prison. The poor conditions, the heat of the jungle, and a recurring fever almost cost him his life. He was kept alive by his faithful wife. He lived to see that the results of his labors were not in vain as thousands of Burmese turned to Christ.

"How shall they hear without a preacher?"

2. **Need for special revelation**

   a. Man cannot be saved through general revelation alone.

   > *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Rom. 10:17

   b. Man cannot fully appreciate general revelation until he accepts special revelation.

   The unconverted man's heart is so blinded by sin that he cannot appreciate all that God has done.

   > *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."* 2 Cor. 4:4
   >
   > *"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."* Rom. 1:21
   >
   > *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."* Ps. 14:1

   When a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior, that person has a new appreciation for God's creation and a better view of himself.

   > *"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour."* Ps. 8:3–5
   >
   > *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."* Prov. 1:7

* * *

Lesson

12 The Attributes of God

Attributes are qualities or characteristics of a person or thing. Although general revelation may give us a glimpse of God's attributes (surely the Creator of the universe is omnipotent), it is not until we come to God's Word that we understand the character of God as He has revealed it to us. Special revelation is absolutely necessary in order to understand the Creator.

A. God's natural attributes

1. Defined

Natural attributes are the very nature of God's Being. They are unique to Him and cannot be the characteristics of man either now or in the future. This is sometimes questioned because of 1 John 3:2, "but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be **like him;** for we shall see him as he is." In what sense will we be like him? We will be like Jesus in His *moral* attributes (love, holiness, mercy, etc.). We can never become like Him in His *natural* attributes (eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, etc.).

2. Described

a. Transcendence (Isa. 57:15)

God is ***above*** His creation.

> *"the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"* Isa. 57:15

b. Immanence (Isa. 57:15, Col. 1:7)

Although God is above all (transcendence), He has seen fit to be actively involved ***within*** His creation (immanence). The climax of His immanence was His coming to earth as a Baby, living for 33 years on earth, and dying on a cross for man's sins.

> *"I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit."* Isa. 57:15
>
> *"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."* Eph. 4:6

c. Eternity

God has ***no beginning nor ending.*** There is no past, present, nor future with God, only eternal present. He is not limited by time.

> *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."* Ps. 90:2

d. Infinity

God has ***no limitation in space.*** All of His attributes are without limit. (See 1 Kings 8:27; Ps. 103:17; 139:7–12; 147:5; Isa. 55:8–9; Jer. 23:24.)

e. Immutability

God is not capable of nor susceptible to change; He is ***unchangeable,*** invariable, and permanent (Ps. 102:24–27; Isa. 46:9–10; James 1:17).

> *"For I am the Lord, I change not."* Mal. 3:6

Some have suggested that God does indeed change because of verses like Genesis 6:6, "it repented the Lord that he had made man," and 1 Samuel 15:11, 35, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king." These verses seem to contradict Numbers 23:19, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent." God's character never changes, though He may change (repent of) His plan of working with individuals or nations. God consistently deals with individuals and nations on the basis of their response to Him; when man's response changes, then God changes His plan of working with that person or nation.

God's unchanging holiness requires Him to treat the wicked differently from the righteous. When the righteous become wicked, His treatment of them must change. The sun is not fickle nor partial because it melts the wax but hardens the clay; the change is not in the sun but in the objects it shines upon. The change in God's treatment of men is described anthropomorphically (giving God human characteristics), as if it were a change in God Himself, but it is only a change in His plan. Threats not fulfilled, as in Jonah 3:4–10, are explained by their conditional nature. God's love will adapt itself to every varying mood and condition of His children, so as to guide their steps, sympathize with their sorrows, and answer their prayers. God responds to us more quickly than the mother's face to the changing moods of her babe. (Adapted from Augustus Strong, *Systematic Theology,* p. 124.)

f. Omniscience (Ps. 139:2; Isa. 40:26; 46:10; Rom. 11:23)

Omniscience means that God is ***all-knowing***. He knows the future as well as the past. He knows all things whether actual or merely possible. He knows things immediately and spontaneously. He knows the thoughts of man better than man knows them himself.

> *"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."* Isa. 46:10
>
> *"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite."* Ps. 147:5
>
> *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."* Heb. 4:13

> *"O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether."* Ps. 139:1–4

> *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"* Rom. 11:33–34

God's knowledge is beyond our comprehension. It is not only that He knows more than we do; He knows differently than we do.

> *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."* Isa. 55:8–9

God's **knowledge** of the future should not be confused with God's **determination** of the future. He can know a certain event will happen without forcing it to happen that way. Sometimes God determines an event ahead of time; sometimes God merely knows an event ahead of time (Jer. 1:5; Acts 2:23; 15:18; Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2).

God's omniscience is a free act of His will. He can temporarily suppress knowledge if He so wills. As the Christ, He could "increase in wisdom" (Luke 2:52), ask questions (Luke 2:46), and empathize with the learner (Heb. 2:17). He could will not to know the day or the hour of His second coming (Mark 13:26, 32). If He desires, He can determine not to remember our sins. This wonderful ability is a reminder of the power of the blood of Christ to completely cleanse us from our sins.

> *"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."* Isa. 43:25

> *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."* Heb. 8:12

God knows all about you. He made you exactly the way you are. He has given you all the abilities and talents you need to do the job you need to do. He has not given you more abilities than you can use nor has He "short-changed" you by not giving you the abilities that you would need to have. Those who fear doing God's will often never consider that an omniscient God knows what is best for them both now and in the future. We can see only today, while God sees what is best for us fifty years in the future. It makes sense to trust Him with our daily walk, as well as our eternal destiny.

g. Omnipresence

Omnipresence means that God is ***everywhere present*** in the universe in the whole of His being. It would be incorrect to suggest that God can be divided up in some material way so that only a part of Him is present in each part of the universe. He fills every part of space with His entire being.

> *"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."* Ps. 139:7–10
>
> *"Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."* Jer. 23:23–24

God is present in the universe, not by compulsion or obligation, but by the free act of His will. We reject the pantheistic notion that God is limited to His creation. He is the Creator of space and, therefore, not subject to it.

> *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"* 1 Kings 8:27
>
> "(Omnipresence) does not mean, however, that He is equally present and present in the same sense in all His creatures. The nature of His indwelling is in harmony with that of His creatures. He does not dwell on earth as He does in heaven, in animals as He does in man, in the inorganic as He does in the organic creation, in the wicked as He does in the pious (believer), nor in the Church as He does in Christ. There is an endless variety in the manner in which He is immanent in His creatures, and in the measure in which they reveal God to those who have eyes to see." —*Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology,* p. 61

Throughout the ages unregenerate man has tried to remove God from his life. Yet there exists within each man a God-shaped void that can be satisfied only with an omnipresent God. The fool says in his heart, "No God for me." Someday God will grant the unsaved that tragic request as God's omnipresent power is withdrawn from the lake of fire.

> *"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."* 2 Thess. 1:8–9

h. Omnipotence

Omnipotence means that God is ***all-powerful*** and is able to do whatever He wills to do. By His great power He created the universe and its creatures, He maintains in existence all that He has created, and He determines the events and the final end of the universe and its inhabitants.

In Scripture He is called *the **Almighty God*** (Gen. 17:1) and the ***Lord God Almighty*** (Rev. 4:8).

> *"Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing."* Job 42:1–2
>
> *"Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee."* Jer. 32:17
>
> *"But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."* Matt. 19:26
>
> *". . . for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."* Rev. 19:6

It is God's omnipotent hand that holds the universe together. Everything in existence is maintained by God's power. All that is necessary for the universe to be destroyed is for the Lord to withdraw His preserving power.

> *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."* Col. 1:16–17

God can do anything in harmony with His nature. He does not do things that are foolish, self-contradictory (e.g., make a square circle), sinful, unworthy of deity, or against the promises He has given in His Word. For instance, God cannot lie ". . . God, that cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). God limits His omnipotence both by His Word and by His Will. He has also limited Himself by giving to each man a free will to choose to accept His offer of salvation or to reject it.

> *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. . . . And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."* 1 John 5:11, 14

The omnipotence of God is a great comfort to the Christian. No problem is too big for God. No trial is too difficult. No challenge is impossible. Throughout the Bible the Christian is encouraged to take his problems to the Lord and trust Him to meet every need.

> *"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"* Ps. 27:1
>
> "The Scriptural affirmations of God's omnipotence are not made in the form of definition, which is foreign to the method of the Scriptures. It often appears in the form of recognition of his universal sovereignty and appeal to his sufficient power. But the most deep and spiritual affirmation of this great reality is wholly informal, and without apparent intention to emphasize the doctrine. It lies in the

> broad fact that God is proclaimed throughout the Scriptures as the One whose power can be safely trusted by all souls, with all their needs and destinies, both now and forever. The Christian thought of God is that of a God who is able to do all rational, right, and worthy things, a God equal to all emergencies, and competent to the care of that which he has made." *—William Newton Clarke*

B. God's moral attributes

1. Definition of moral attributes

God's moral attributes are characteristics of God revealed in His personal interaction with mankind. They include His love, grace, mercy, justice, holiness, righteousness, truth, and goodness. These attributes of God are examples of what should be in every man. Although we can never be like God in His natural attributes (omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, etc.), we should strive to be like Him in His moral attributes. Someday when we receive our glorified bodies we will be truly "like Him" in His moral attributes.

> *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."* 1 John 3:2

2. Description of God's moral attributes

a. Holiness

Holiness is that perfection of God whereby He abhors that which is evil and demands purity. God is separated totally from sin and evil (James 1:13). Because of God's holiness, a sinful individual has no right to come into His presence. For this reason God had to turn His back on His own Son on Calvary when He "became sin for us, who knew no sin." If we approach God at all, we must come through the merits (or holiness) of Another (Exod. 15:11; Ps. 22:1–3; Matt. 27:46; and Rev. 15:4).

> *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*
> Rom. 5:1–2

We should approach God with reverence and godly fear. He is not merely "the Man upstairs." God is holy. We should not use the "lingo" of the world to praise the Lord or to refer to God. God's holiness deserves more than our using "contemporary" expressions to describe the One Who is above all.

We are commanded to be holy. 1 Peter 1:15–16 says: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." We need to look upon sin as "exceeding sinful." We need to picture each of our sins as being put upon Jesus Christ as He died on the cross for those sins.

> If someone broke into our house and used a knife to kill someone we loved very much, would we cherish the knife? Would we frame it or put it in a trophy case? Of course not. Then we as Christians should not prize or hold on to the very sins that caused Jesus Christ to go to Calvary and die. In a sense our sins killed Jesus Christ; therefore, He is worthy of our hatred of sin.
>
> *"Be ye holy; for I am holy."* 1 Pet. 1:16

b. Justice

Justice is the attribute of God by which He carries out the laws that He has imposed. It has two sides. It is ***remunerative*** (rewarding) and ***retributive*** (chastising). Since God cannot act contrary to His laws, sin must be punished. A person must suffer for his own sin or else accept God's plan of redemption by which Jesus Christ becomes the sinner's substitute. God is the One Who has been wronged by sin; therefore, He is the only One Who can determine how restitution is made.

Mankind has always attempted to improve on God's plan of salvation; "salvation by faith" seems too simple. But whether it is simple or not, is not the question. God has been "wronged," and therefore He is the One who determines the way back into His graces. It would be folly for an individual to appear in a courtroom and argue concerning the penalty for his crime. A convicted criminal has no right to suggest a fine of $25 for the crime of murder. The penalty to be imposed is the responsibility of the judge. Likewise, a man is a fool if he thinks his way of restitution is better than that of "the Judge of all the earth." Though salvation is simple for the individual, it was costly to the Father, in that He gave His Son's life for our salvation. We too are commanded to be just.

> "Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment." *Hos. 12:6*

> "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" *Mic. 6:8*

We must always strive to be just in our dealings with others. There should be a balance in our lives even as God has a perfect balance between love and justice.

c. Righteousness

Righteousness is the attribute that causes God to ***always do right.*** Abraham realized that sin deserves God's punishment, but he also realized that God does not punish the righteous. Abraham, therefore, pleaded for Sodom on the basis of God's righteousness.

> *"That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"*
>
> Gen. 18:25

This wonderful attribute of God guarantees that He will always keep His promises. He can do no other. His attribute of righteousness is the reason that men can approach a holy God. Note these verses:

> *"Thou art the* LORD *the God, who . . . madest a covenant with him [Abraham] to give the land . . . I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous."* Neh. 9:7–8
>
> *"O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem."* Dan. 9:16
>
> *"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* 2 Tim. 4:8

GOD REWARDS **RIGHTEOUSNESS** IN THE CHRISTIAN.

> *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.* Matt. 5:6
>
> *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* James 5:16

The philosophy of the world today is "if it feels right, do it." But God's Word demands that we do right because it **is** right. A Christian ought to have godly character. Godly character is doing what is right regardless of convenience, the circumstances, or the eventual outcome. Joseph had character in rejecting the offers of Potiphar's wife in spite of the results. Each Christian has that same obligation.

d. Love

Love is the attribute which moves God to communicate His concern for the ultimate welfare of the ones that He loves. He wants the very best for those He loves. Therefore His love moved Him to sacrifice His life for the sake of another.

> *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* John 15:13
>
> *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."* John 3:16
>
> *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"* Rom. 8:32

The world uses the word ***love*** so flippantly that many Christians have a very shallow view of Biblical love. Love is concern for the welfare of another even above one's own welfare. The world's idea of love is usually lust. Love is giving; lust is getting. Lust can't wait to get, while love can't wait to give. As Christians, we are commanded to love other Christians (1 John 4:20–21), to love our enemies (Matt. 5:43–44), and to love the Lord (Deut. 6:5). We are to show our love for God by keeping His commandments (John 14:15).

e. Mercy

Mercy is God's compassion for the sinner (Rom. 5:8) in not giving him what he deserves.

> *"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."* Mic. 7:18

In the Hebrew the word *mercy* comes from the same root as the word for a mother's womb. It is the caring for that which is completely helpless.

> "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" *Mic. 6:8*

f. Grace

Grace is the unmerited goodness and love of God for those who have forfeited it (Eph. 1:6–7; 2:7–9; Titus 2:11).

> *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."* Eph. 2:8

Whereas ***mercy*** is God's not giving us what we do deserve, ***grace*** is God's giving us what we do not deserve.

g. Goodness

This attribute of God is revealed in His bountiful dealing with mankind.

> *"The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works."* Ps. 145:9
>
> *"He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."* Matt. 5:45

h. Truth

God cannot lie nor tolerate untruth. God ***could*** commend Rahab's faith (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25), but could not commend her lie (Josh 2:4).

> *"God is not a man, that he should lie."* Num. 23:19
>
> *"There hath not failed one word of all his good promise."* 1 Kings 8:56
>
> *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life."* John 14:6
>
> *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."* John 17:17

Lesson 13 Nature and Names of God

A. The nature of God

1. God is a **Unity.**

The Divine nature is indivisible; there is but one infinite and perfect Spirit. The Jewish nation was constantly exposed to ***polytheism*** (belief in more than one "god") in Egypt and in Canaan. The people of these nations thought they needed more than one god because one was insufficient. But the idea of two or more gods is self-contradictory because each would limit the other and thereby destroy the omnipotence and ***sovereignty*** (absolute rule) of both.

> *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."* Deut. 6:4

The Hebrew language has two different words for *one*. The first is singular, and the other is collective (e.g., *one* bushel of apples). The word for *one* in Deuteronomy 6:4 is the collective *one*. Even in God's unity we begin to get a glimpse of His Trinity.

> *"That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth."* Ps. 83:18
>
> *"Thou art God alone."* Ps. 86:10
>
> *"Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour."* Isa. 43:10–11
>
> *"I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. . . . Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."* Isa. 44:6, 8
>
> *"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me. . . . That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else."* Isa. 45:5–6
>
> *"I am the LORD; and there is none else."* Isa. 45:18
>
> *"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is one LORD."* Mark 12:29
>
> *"We know . . . that there is none other God but one."* 1 Cor. 8:4
>
> *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* 1 Tim. 2:5

2. God is a **Trinity.**

God is one in His essential being, but He exists in three Persons. Each Person of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is fully God.

Father
Son
GOD
Holy Spirit

Some cults cannot accept the idea of the Trinity. Their philosophy is "what I cannot understand, I cannot believe." There are many things that most of us cannot fully explain, but we still believe in them and benefit from them (e.g., electricity, atoms, the human mind, etc.).

a. The Trinity is quietly declared in the **Old Testament.**

(1) In the plural name for God (Gen. 1:1)

One of the Hebrew names for God is ***Elohim.*** It is a compound unity. It is a singular noun with a plural ending. (The *-im* ending in Hebrew is the plural form, as in *cherubim* and *seraphim.*)

(2) In the plural forms of the personal pronouns for God

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Gen. 1:26

"Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language." Gen. 11:7

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isa. 6:8

(3) In the **Theophanies** (visible appearances of God, usually in human form) (Gen. 22:11–12; Exod. 3:1–15)

(4) In the threefold Aaronic blessing

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Num. 6:24–26

(5) In the "thrice holy" of Isaiah 6:3

"And one [seraph] cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

b. The Trinity is openly declared in the **New Testament.**

(1) At Christ's baptism (Matt. 3:16–17)

The **Father** speaks.
The **Son** is baptized.
The **Holy Spirit** descends like a dove.

(2) In the baptismal formula

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 28:19

(3) In the apostolic benediction

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." 2 Cor. 13:14

(4) In the teachings of Jesus

"And I [Jesus] will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth." John 14:16–17

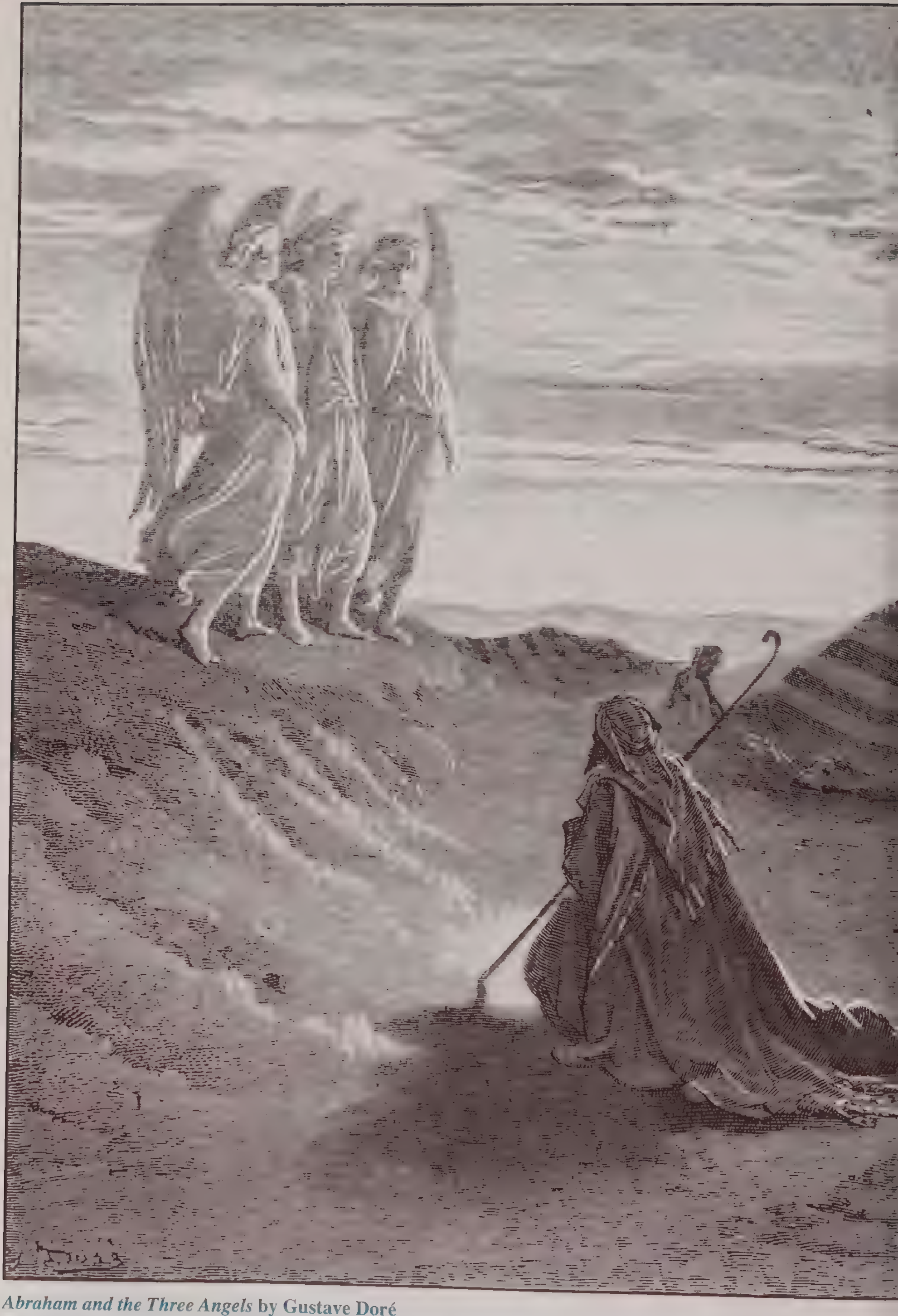
(5) In the fact that all three are called "God"

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father." Rom. 1:7

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. 9:5

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Heb. 1:8

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Acts 5:3–4



Abraham and the Three Angels **by Gustave Doré**

"And the LORD appeared unto him [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre . . . And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, . . ." *Gen. 18:1–3a*

HEBREW VOWEL POINTS

The Biblical Hebrew language consists only of consonants. In the eighth or ninth century A.D., the Masoretes began adding vowel sounds (indicated by dots and lines above or below the Hebrew consonants) called **vowel points.** These were introduced as a pronunciation guide for those unfamiliar with the true sound of the Hebrew language.

Adding these vowel points to the Hebrew consonant **daleth** (the English "d" sound) results in these phonetic blends:

dĕ	dā	dă	dä	dĭ	dō	dōō	də
דֶ	דֵ	דַ	דָ	דִ	דֹ	דֻ	דְ

By the Masoretes' placing the vowel points above or below the Hebrew consonants there was less likelihood the Hebrew consonants (inspired by God) would be confused with the vowel points (added by man) than if the vowels were added between the Hebrew consonants (as in most languages).

Occasionally a vowel point will join with a succeeding consonant (Hebrew reads from right to left) to express a stronger vowel sound.

dō (w)	dōō(w)	dē(y)
דוֹ	דוּ	דִי

3. God is a **Spirit.** (John 4:24)

   The word ***Spirit*** is the best way to describe the divine nature. God is not material; the Scriptures clearly indicate that fact (see Isa. 66:1; 1 Kings 8:27). This means that He does not have a body and that He is invisible (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17).

   A question that naturally arises concerns the Bible's use of expressions such as God's "hand" or His "back" or His "face." If He is a Spirit, why do we have such expressions in the Bible? These are called ***anthropomorphisms;*** i.e., ascribing to God human features to help us as simple human beings to begin to understand God's feelings toward us and His working in our lives. Technically, "no man has seen God at any time," but if God wills, He can put on the outward appearance of a man to meet with men.

4. God is a **Person.**

   Two ingredients are required in order to classify someone as a person: self-consciousness and self-determination. God's **"I am"** (Exod. 3:14) implies self-consciousness; His **"I will"** (Exod. 6:6–8) implies self-determination.

God possesses all the qualities of personhood. He possesses **intellect** (Exod. 3:7; Isa. 1:18), **emotion** (1 Kings 11:9; Prov. 6:16), and **will** (Gen. 3:15). His personal names and the personal pronouns used of Him indicate personality (Gen. 15:6; Exod. 3:14; and Ps. 23:1). God is a living Person (Jer. 10:10–16).

B. The names of God

1. God's **Old Testament** names

   a. **Jehovah:** "the Self-Existent One" [*LORD* in KJV] ("I am"—Exod. 3:14)

   This is God's covenant name. It is always an indication that God keeps His promises even though man fails Him often. This name was highly honored by the scribes, who were responsible for copying Biblical manuscripts. Before they would write this name, they would take a bath and change their clothes. Once they began to write His holy name they would not even allow the king's entrance to interrupt them. Should we today reverence His holy name any less?

   b. **Adonai:** "My Lord; my Master" [*Lord* in KJV]

   Our Master has a right to our obedience (Matt. 23:10; Luke 6:46; John 13:13), and as His servants we have the privilege of direction in His service (Isa. 6:8–11).

JEHOVAH

The early Jews had such a reverence for the proper name of God that they would not even pronounce publicly the covenant name of **Jehovah.** As early as Nehemiah's day they feared that to pronounce it might make them guilty of breaking the third commandment ("Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain"). Hebrew scribes originally wrote the name with consonants exclusively; the traditional English letters for the Hebrew consonants are *JHVH*. Out of reverence, the Jews would not pronounce this proper name but substituted another name for God as they read the scripture publicly. This second title was written *a*D*o*N*a*Y* (pronounced Adonai [ă•dō•nī′]); it means "Lord" or "Master."

To indicate this substitution, the scribes did an interesting thing. They wrote the vowel points of *a*D*o*N*a*Y under the consonants of JHVH. This was a constant reminder to them that while they were to **write JHVH** (the Self-Existent One) in the Scripture scroll, they were to **pronounce *a*D*o*N*a*Y** (Lord or Master) in public worship.

*Small, italicized vowels represent equivalent vowel points added to the consonants in Hebrew.

> This scribal addition resulted in the appearance of J*e*H*o*V*a*H. European scholars of the Renaissance supposed, therefore, that the correct pronunciation was "Jehovah." (Modern commentators sometimes transliterated the name as *YHWH*, which they believe should be pronounced "Yahweh.")
>
> The Authorized Version of the English Bible (our KJV) uses the translation "LORD" or "Jehovah" for the proper name *JHVH*, and it uses "Lord" for the name *Adonai*. The reverence of the Jews for the name Jehovah should be a constant reminder to us of the deep respect all men should have for the wonderful name of God.

c. **Elohim:** "the Strong One"; "the One to be Feared" [*God* in KJV] (Gen. 1:1)

When God first introduced Himself to us in Genesis 1:1, He used the name which shows He is indeed **strong** enough to create the heavens and the earth and is therefore worthy of reverence.

d. **El Shaddai:** "the All-Sufficient One" [*God Almighty* in KJV] (Gen. 17:1)

God reminded Abraham of His "all-sufficiency" when He promised Abraham a son in his old age.

e. **El Elyon:** "the Most High God" [*Most High* in KJV] (Isa. 14:13–14)

This name for God is also found throughout the book of Daniel as the Babylonian rulers realized Daniel's God was superior to their heathen gods.

2. God's **New Testament** names

a. **Theos :** the Old Testament "Elohim" [*God* in KJV] (John 20:28)

b. **Kurios:** the Old Testament "Adonai" [*Lord* in KJV] (John 20:28)

c. **Pater:** no Old Testament equivalent [*Father* in KJV] (Luke 11:2)

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He established the parental relationship between God and man. When an individual accepts Jesus Christ as Savior, God becomes his heavenly Father.

> *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."* John 1:12

d. **Immanuel:** "God with us" (Isa. 7:14; 8:8–10; Matt. 1:23)

God was **with us** for 33 years in the person of Jesus Christ. Someday He will be **with us** forever (Rev. 21:3).

Lesson

14 God's Acts of Creation

A. Definitions of creation

Creation is the act of God whereby He brought all things into existence. The word *creation* is used in two senses: *immediate creation* and *mediate creation.*

1. **Immediate** creation (Gen. 1:1)

Immediate creation was the act of the Triune God by which He brought into existence immediately, without the use of preexisting materials, the entire universe.

a. All three Persons of the Trinity created.

(1) God the **Father** created.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1

The Hebrew word for God (*Elohim*) in this verse reveals two things: (1) God is "The Strong One," perfectly capable of creating the world, and (2) this plural form of the Hebrew implies that the Trinity was present and active in the creative act.

(2) God the **Son** created.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." John 1:1, 3

"For by him [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible . . . all things were created by him, and for him." Col. 1:16

(3) God the **Holy Spirit** created.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. 1:2

b. The Trinity created the universe **out of nothing.**

The Latin phrase ***ex nihilo*** is used to signify this creation "out of nothing."

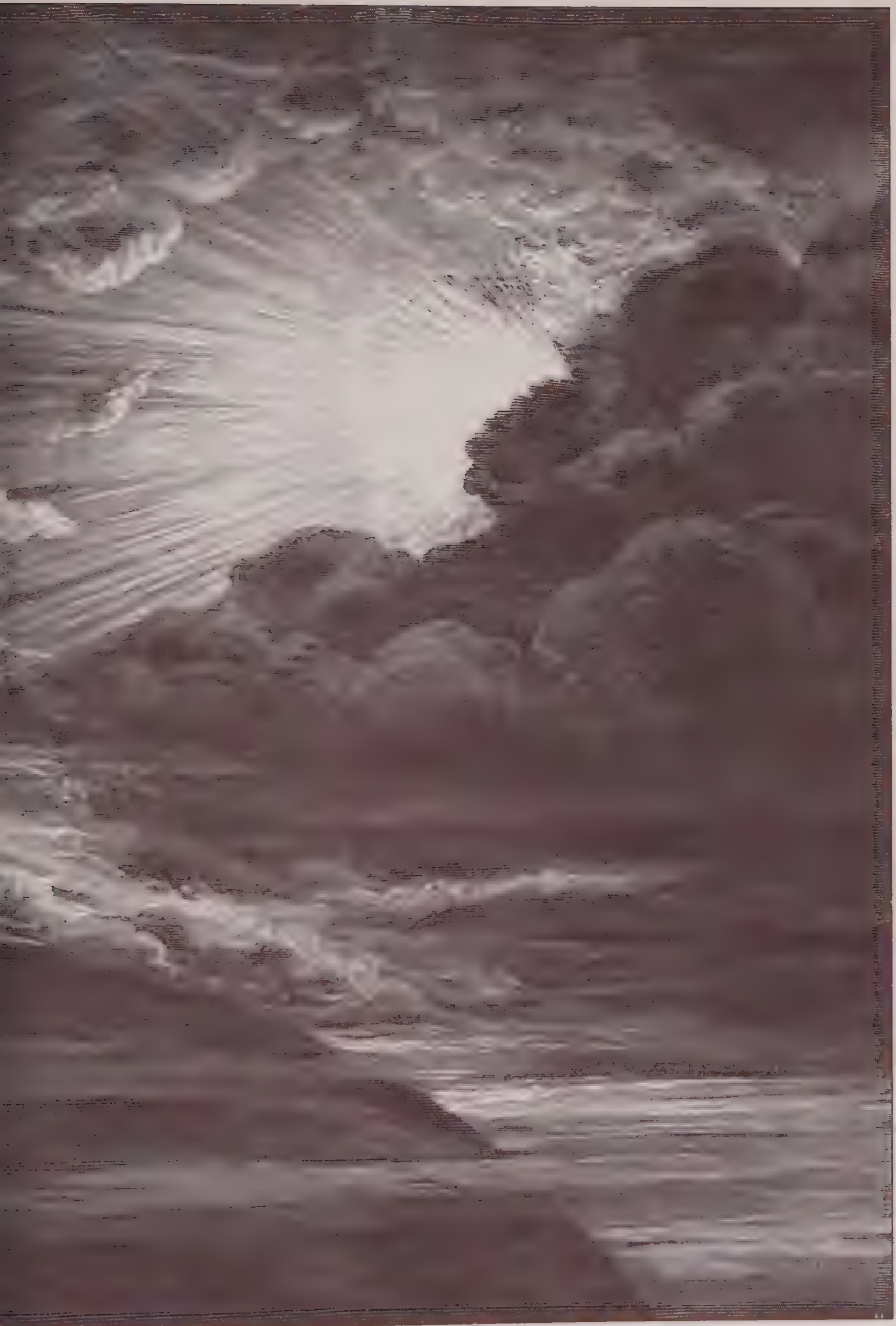
"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Gen. 1:3

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Heb. 11:3

2. **Mediate** creation

Mediate creation is the act of God in which He does not originate things but simply shapes and transforms material that is already in existence.

Many of the miracles of Christ were accomplished by mediate creation. He turned water into wine (John 2:1–11), fed 5,000 men with five loaves of bread and two fish (John 6:5–14), transformed blind eyes (John 9:1–41), deaf ears (Mark 7:31–37), lame legs (John 5:1–9), and wicked hearts (Ps. 51:10, 17).



The Creation of Light **by Gustave Doré**

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. . . . And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

Gen. 1:1–3

In **Creation** God created something out of nothing.

In **salvation** God creates something holy out of something unholy.

> *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* 2 Cor. 5:17

B. The basis of Creation

1. Both Creation as declared in the Scriptures and the man-made philosophy of evolution are based on faith.
    - **a.** The Christian believes by faith that there is a God and that God created as He says in His Word.

        > *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God."* Heb. 11:3

    - **b.** The evolutionist believes by faith either that there is no God, or that if there is a God, He did not create the heavens and the earth as He revealed in the first two chapters of Genesis.

        > "The more one studies paleontology [the fossil record] the more certain one becomes that evolution is based on faith alone." —*Louis T. More*, evolutionist
        >
        > "What is evolution based upon? Upon nothing whatever but faith, upon belief in the reality of the unseen—belief in fossils that cannot be produced, belief in the embryological evidence that does not exist, belief in the breeding experiments that refuse to come off. It is faith 'unjustified by works.'" —*Arthur N. Fields*, Australian geologist
        >
        > "Evolution is a time-honored scientific tenet of faith." —*David Allbrook*, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Western Australia
        >
        > "Meanwhile, though our faith in evolution stands unshaken, we have no acceptable account of the origin of 'species.'" —*William Bateson*, evolutionist
        >
        > "Evolution is a fairy tale for adults." —*Dr. Duane Gish*, biologist
        >
        > "In Grimms' Fairy Tales someone kisses a frog and in two seconds it becomes a prince. That is a fairy tale. In evolution, someone kisses a frog and in two million years, it becomes a prince. That is not science. It is simply a faith." —*Dr. D. James Kennedy*

2. Creation is based on a **reasonable** faith.
    - **a.** The scientific method requires observability and repeatability (i.e., the ability to duplicate something in a controlled environment).
    - **b.** God is the only One who **observed** the creation.

        > *"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."* Gen. 1:31
        >
        > *"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, . . . Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?"* Job 38:1, 4

    - **c.** No one has **observed** evolution in progress.

        > "Within the period of human history we do not know of a single instance of the transformation of one species into another one. . . . It may be claimed that the theory of descent is lacking, therefore, in the

most essential feature [an eyewitness to its occurrence] which is needed to place the theory on a scientific basis." —*Evolutionist T. H. Morgan, Evolution and Adaptation.* Quoted by D. James Kennedy in *Why I Believe* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1980), p. 59.

d. Neither Creation (of this universe) nor evolution is repeatable.

(1) God ended His Creation.

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made." Gen. 2:2

"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." Exod. 20:11

(2) Man cannot "duplicate" evolution in the scientific laboratory.

"Neither evolution nor creation can be either confirmed or falsified scientifically." —*Dr. N. Heribert-Nilsson*

"[The evolutionary] assumptions by their nature are not capable of experimental verification." —*G. A. Kerkut,* evolutionist

e. Creation is reasonable.

Design surely demands a Designer. An effect demands a Cause. Organization demands an Intelligence behind it. Creation is a faith based on the observable evidence of order and design all about us in the observable world and universe.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:1

WHAT EVOLUTIONISTS SAY

"[Creation] will present a parallel to the theory of evolution itself, a theory universally accepted not because it can be proved by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible." —*Professor D. M. S. Watson*

"Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable." —*Sir Arthur Keith,* evolutionist

"One cannot assume that man is madeover anthropoid ape of any sort, for much of the available evidence is strongly against that assumption." —*Wm. L. Straus, Jr.*

"It is clear that the doctrine of evolution is directly antagonistic to that of Creation. . . . Evolution, if consistently accepted, makes it impossible to believe the Bible." —*Thomas Huxley*

"I suppose the reason we leaped at The Origin of Species was because the idea of God interfered with our sexual mores." —*Sir Julian Huxley*

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. 4:3–4

C. The importance of belief in Creation

1. It determines our attitude toward the trustworthiness of God's Word.

   Because of its "supernatural" features, the account of the Creation is one of the first areas to be questioned when an individual or group begins its decline into a total rejection of the Word of God. Perhaps more Bibles have had the first eleven chapters of Genesis theoretically "cut out" than any other passage of Scripture. It is very important that we accept the account of Creation for the following reasons:

   a. If we cannot accept Moses' account of Creation, then we cannot accept the words of Christ.

   Jesus Himself put the books of Moses on an equal plane with His own words.

   > *"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"* John 5:45–47

   b. If we cannot trust the Biblical account of Creation, how can we trust the Biblical accounts of salvation by faith, eternal life, heaven, and hell?

   Some evolutionists (theistic evolutionists) would have us believe that evolution was God's method for completing His original Creation. But what kind of God would He be if His revelation to us concerning the original Creation was inaccurate? He certainly would not be a God worthy of our trust concerning our eternal destiny and the way of salvation.

2. To reject God's Word and His plan of salvation necessitates that the unbeliever theorize some system of origins such as evolution.

   > *"But the natural [unsaved] man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* 1 Cor. 2:14

   > *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."* 2 Cor. 4:3–4

   In the light of these verses, it is not surprising that many people accept the idea of evolution. If they were to accept Creation, then they would also need to accept the fact of their own soul's lost condition and their future destiny in hell.

   > *"[He] that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."* John 3:20

   When an individual rejects the Bible as God's Word, he opens himself to the belief in "fables." The tragic end is a life of hopelessness and despair.

Lesson

15 The Six Days of Creation

The Bible records the creation of our earth with its atmosphere, waters, and living things in six 24 hour days.

> *"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: . . . For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day."* Exod. 20:9, 11

It may be helpful to remember the days of creation by grouping them in pairs. Days 1 and 4 describe God's creation of light and the instruments of that light. Days 2 and 5 involved the creation of the atmosphere, the waters, and the creatures that inhabit those areas. Days 3 and 6 emphasized God's bringing forth of the land and plants as well as the "creatures" that inhabit the land.

DAY 1	Light created; day and night	**DAY 4**	Sun, moon, and stars made visible to give seasons, months, and time
DAY 2	Atmosphere above divided from waters beneath	**DAY 5**	Fowl and water creatures created
DAY 3	Land made visible; plant kingdom created	**DAY 6**	Land animals and man created

A. The first day Gen. 1:3–5

God had only to speak in order for this world to come into existence.

> *"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."* Ps. 33:6, 9

> *"Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created."* Ps. 148:5

> *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God."* Heb. 11:3

The darkness as well as the light was created by God. Since "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5), He created darkness for the benefit of mankind (Isa. 45:7). According to man's present knowledge, darkness is the absence of light.

On the first day God probably started the earth rotating on its axis, giving the continual night and day that mankind still continues to enjoy.

> *"I form the light, and create darkness."* Isa. 45:7

> *"Thou makest darkness, and it is night."* Ps. 104:20

B. The second day Gen. 1:6–8

> *"And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."* Gen. 1:6

The word *firmament* comes from a verb which means "to beat out, to spread out." It seems to refer to the expanse of the heavens. In verse eight of Genesis 1 "God called the firmament Heaven." The Bible uses the word *heaven* to refer to three different places. The first heaven is the atmosphere of the earth (Gen. 1:8); the second heaven is outer space (Jer. 23:24); and the third heaven is the place of God's abode (2 Cor. 12:2). Evidently the matter of the universe had already been created and the earth was covered with water vapor. On the second day God divided the water vapor; part was condensed, and part remained as water vapor surrounding the earth, but it was spread out into a firmament for the sky.

C. The third day Gen. 1:9–13

On the third day of creation God caused the dry land to appear as it bulged up out of the waters that had covered the earth. He called the dry land earth. God's right to name this planet shows His dominion over all that He has created. God later gave this "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" to Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:28).

God caused trees and all the plant kingdom to come forth out of the dry land, and all of these had the appearance of age. The trees and plants were capable of bearing fruit. That which would be needed by mankind was already prepared three days before God created man.

D. The fourth day Gen. 1:14–19

On this day God caused the luminaries to give the light for day and the light for night. The light-bearers would bear the light that God had created on the first day. God then gives five purposes of these luminaries.

> *"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."* Gen. 1:14

Today we still get our day from the sun, our months from the moon, our years from the sun's movement on the horizon, and our time is calculated by the stars. If these were created in verse 1, then on the fourth day God caused the atmosphere to clear up sufficiently for man to be able to observe these heavenly bodies. We know today that some planets are covered with rings of clouds that obscure any observations of other heavenly bodies. Even heavily overcast days prohibit our seeing the sun, moon, or stars. On the fourth day God made it possible for man to calculate time.

In this very first chapter of the Bible God gives a prophecy concerning His use of the sun, moon, and stars as signs of His active participation in the course of history.

> *"For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."* Matt. 2:2
>
> *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars."* Luke 21:25
>
> *"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the* L*ORD come."* Acts 2:20

God reveals that the purpose of these luminaries was to divide the seasons as well as night and day. In the covenant God made with Noah, He promised him that the seasons, days, and years would never cease.

> *"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."* Gen. 8:22

This is a wonderful promise. Every time the sun rises or the seasons change we should be reminded that **God keeps His promises.** Even when the nation of Israel was in captivity, the prophets reminded them that God would never break His covenant with them. Just as it is impossible for man to change the seasons, it is impossible for God to break His promises.

> *"Thus saith the* L*ORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant."* Jer. 33:20–21

E. The fifth day Gen. 1:20–23

In the description of the fifth day of creation two interesting expressions are used. The first is the word translated "whales" (Gen. 1:21), and the other is the phrase "after their kind" (Gen. 1:21).

1. *Whales* Gen. 1:21

a. Definition of the word

The English word *whale* in Genesis 1:21 is a translation of the Hebrew word *tannin*. It could better be translated "great sea monster" or "gigantic aquatic reptile." This seems to be the beginning of the answer to the "Dilemma of the Dinosaur." It is interesting to note that large aquatic mammals are an embarrassment to the evolutionist. He has a difficult time explaining why a fish would become a lizard, then a piglike land mammal, then reverse its "evolution" and go back into the water as it continues to grow larger.

b. Dragon theme in Scripture

What the Bible calls dragons are probably what scientists today call dinosaurs. Dragons are mentioned in the following Scripture references:

> *"Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."* Deut. 32:33

> *"And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well."* Neh. 2:13
>
> *"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."* Ps. 91:13
>
> *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years."* Rev. 20:1–2

c. Dinosaurs in Job

Many Bible scholars believe that the behemoth and leviathan of Job were also dinosaurs. Since Job probably lived before the events of Genesis 12, he may have personally observed these creatures roaming the earth and swimming in the sea.

(1) Behemoth

> *"Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares."* Job 40:15–24

Job 40 describes behemoth as an extremely large creature living near a brook and eating grass. The size of his tail ("like a cedar") does not appear to describe any animal in existence today. It may have been a reptile similar to *Apatosaurus* (or "Brontosaurus"), a huge, swamp-dwelling herbivore.

(2) Leviathan

> *"Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?"* Job 41:1–5

No creature on earth was as fearless as leviathan, which God describes in Job 41 as a fire-breathing aquatic animal with scaly skin, thick armor, powerful jaws, and terrible teeth.

> *"Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. In*

his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him. The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved. His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves. The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear. Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire. He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary." Job 41:19–32

d. Reasons for extinction

Scientists have given many possible reasons for the extinction of these beasts. The most popular current hypothesis is that they became extinct suddenly as a result of some catastrophe. Many Christians think that the dinosaur probably could not cope with the vast climatic changes brought about after the Genesis Flood and thus died out. Since it is quite common for animals even today to become extinct for one reason or another, there is no reason (other than circular reasoning to "prove" evolution) to believe that their extinction is in any way related to evolutionary philosophy.

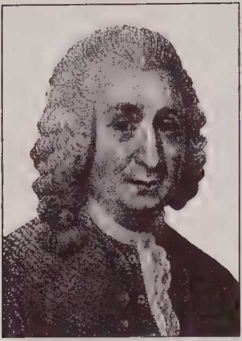
Before the Flood, both men and animals had a longer life expectancy. Since a man reaches his full size around the age of 20, living to be 70 or 700 would not change his physical stature appreciably. But that is not true of reptiles. They continue to grow physically throughout their entire life span. Therefore, the decreased life span after the Flood evidently decreased the ultimate size of the reptiles. The dinosaur skeletons we see in museums today may be those reptiles that grew for several hundred years. Since the Millennium will see the return of longevity (Isa. 65:20), perhaps it will also see the return of large reptiles.

Dinosaurs were no doubt on Noah's ark, since dragons (dinosaurs) are mentioned in Scripture after the Flood (Deut. 32:33; Neh. 2:13). The huge adults did not have to fit into the ark, of course. Young dinosaurs, or even eggs, would do quite as well.

2. ***"After their kind"*** (Gen. 1:21)

The Bible indicates that it is impossible for one kind of plant or animal to produce a different kind of plant or animal. Each must reproduce "after his kind" (Gen. 1:21).

"Just over two hundred years ago, a Swedish naturalist named **Carolus Linnaeus** (1707–1778) devised a simple, practical method of classification for use by scientists. We use his method today, with some additions. Linnaeus, an outstanding naturalist, was also an excellent teacher and a



Carolus Linnaeus

dedicated and outspoken Christian. Because he accepted the Biblical account of Creation, Linnaeus concluded that the created kinds never alter enough to form new and different kinds. He stood firm on this belief and is given credit for the doctrine of **fixity of species.** He insisted, "Nullae species novae" (No new species). This was the beginning of a sharp difference of opinion between Bible-believing naturalists and those who did not believe the Bible. It is important to realize that what the Bible means by "created kinds" and what Linnaeus meant by "fixed species" is not necessarily identical with what many modern biologists classify as a "species." The Biblical **kind** [Hebrew, *min*] means "group of organisms that can interbreed freely in nature," and may refer to a species, a genus, or a family." —*Keith Graham,* et al., *Biology: God's Living Creation* (Pensacola: A Beka Book Publications, 1986), p. 78.

The evolutionist has consistently claimed that there *are* examples of cross-breeding of different kinds throughout history. Two favorite arguments were "Eohippus" and "mutations."

a. Eohippus (This was allegedly a horse whose descendants had one less toe than their ancestor.)

- **(1)** This still does not explain where Eohippus came from.
- **(2)** There is no proof that this so-called "fossil horse" evolved from another horse.
- **(3)** There is no proof that Eohippus is actually a horse.
- **(4)** The "change" in the number of toes contradicts evolutionary theory. Heinze said, "Losing toes does not make an organism more complex, but more simple."

Evolutionists by and large have discarded the Eohippus story by now. It is only seen now in textbooks.

b. Mutations (sudden small changes in the DNA code of the genes which are passed on to an organism's offspring)

- **(1)** Mutations are extremely rare (1 in 10,000–100,000).
- **(2)** Mutations are usually harmful.
- **(3)** Mutations are very unpredictable, happening at random.
- **(4)** Mutations never develop any new species.

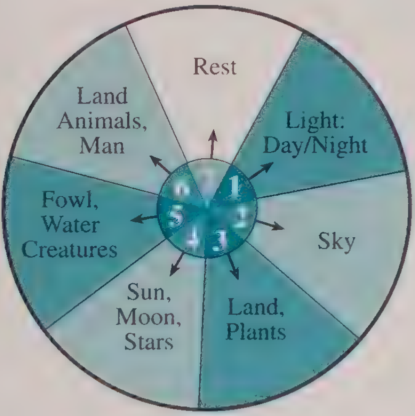
Similarities in various animals indicate a common Creator. Just as a certain writer, composer, or artist has a certain style that is easily recognized; so the Master Designer has consistently put His style into His wonderful creation. Similarities between the monkey and man could just as easily indicate that the monkey evolved from man (one scientist has suggested the possibility) as the reverse. Actually, they indicate that both were created by God.

BIOCHEMISTRY AND MAN'S ANCESTORS

1. Blood precipitation tests indicate the chimpanzee is man's closest relative.
2. Milk chemistry indicates that the donkey is man's closest relative.
3. Cholesterol level tests indicate that the garter snake is man's closest relative.
4. Tear enzyme chemistry indicates that the chicken is man's closest relative.
5. On the basis of another type of blood chemistry test, the butter bean is man's closest relative.

—*Gary E. Parker, Creation: The Facts of Life*
(San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1980) pp. 21–22.

F. The sixth day Gen. 1:24–31; 2:7–25



the days of Creation

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. . . . And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. . . . And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Gen. 1:24, 26–27, 31

The sixth day was the climax of God's creative acts. He began the day by creating all the land animals and ended it by creating man and woman. Man is the crown of all of creation. Man is the only being made in the image of God with intellect, emotions, and a will. So important was this sixth day to God that He devoted parts of the first two chapters of Genesis to the details of this wonderful creation. By the end of the sixth day He had completed all His creation and was ready for a day of rest.

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made." Gen. 2:1–2

Lesson

16 The Sovereignty of God

A. Definitions of God's sovereignty

Sovereignty is the absolute right that God has to run the universe as He wants because He created it for His own purposes and glory.

Sovereignty is God's right to do what He wants with what is His.

In the parable of Matthew 20, a householder early in the morning began to hire workers for his vineyard. They agreed to work for a normal day's wages. He also hired additional workers at the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours of the day (9 a.m., 12 noon, 3 p.m., and 5 p.m., respectively). At the end of the day the householder gave all the workers the same amount of money, a penny (or denarius). Some murmured and complained, but the householder was correct when he replied:

> *"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"* Matt. 20:15

The householder could have given the late-coming workers more money than the others without their even coming to work at all.

Sovereignty is a matter of ownership.

B. Extent of God's sovereignty

1. God controls **the universe.**

> *"Where wast thou when I [God] laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?"* Job 38:4–6

> *"He sendeth out his word, and melteth them [snow, frost, and ice]: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow."* Ps. 147:18

> *"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."* Matt. 5:45

2. God controls **the plant and animal creation.**

> *"The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God."* Ps. 104:21

> *"Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah."* Jon. 1:17

> *"And the LORD God prepared a gourd, . . . But God prepared a worm."* Jon. 4:6–7

> *"Behold the fowls of the air: . . . your heavenly Father feedeth them."* Matt. 6:26

> *"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, . . . shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"* Matt. 6:30

3. God controls **all nations.**

> *"He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again."* Job 12:23
>
> *"For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations."* Ps. 22:28
>
> *"The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."* Dan. 4:25
>
> *"He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"* Dan. 4:35

4. God controls **the length of a man's life.**

> *"In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind."* Job 12:10
>
> *"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."* Luke 12:20
>
> *"This spake he [Jesus], signifying by what death he [Peter] should glorify God."* John 21:19
>
> *"Jesus saith unto him [Peter], If I will that he [John] tarry [live] till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me."* John 21:22

5. God controls **all things for His glory.**

> *"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."* Isa. 46:9–11
>
> *"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."* Ps. 115:3
>
> *"For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another."* Isa. 48:11
>
> *"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: . . . who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."* Eph. 1:9–11

C. Self-limitations of God's sovereignty

If man could limit God in any way, He would cease to be God. But God in His sovereignty may impose upon Himself certain limitations.

> "It should be borne in mind that if allowing man a measure of freedom were imposed upon God from without, or if it were forced upon Him by some strange necessity, objection to it might be made. But when it is that which He alone initiates—of His own voluntary doing—out of pure love and for high and lofty ends which His unmitigated omnipotence assures, it is only to the praise of His glory that it is so."
>
> —*Samuel Fisk,*
> *Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom*
> (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Bros., 1973), p. 52.

It is clear from the Scriptures that man may limit God if God allows him that privilege.

> *"Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel."* Ps. 78:41

The limitations that God has placed upon Himself are primarily in three areas: the existence of sin, the free will of man, and the privilege of prayer.

1. The **existence of sin**

   God did not determine sin's existence, but He allowed it in the universe.

   > *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."* James 1:13

   God *could have* made man without the ability to sin (as He will in Heaven some day), but that was not His plan for earth. He wanted man to love Him by choice, not by force. The Bible teaches five lessons about God's relationship to sin.

   a. God **permits** some sin to fully manifest itself.

   > *"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. . . . Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."* Rom. 1:21, 24

   b. God **prevents** some sin.

   > *"And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her."* Gen. 20:6

   c. God **determines the limits** to which Satan may go in tempting or trying the individual.

   > *"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand."* Job 1:12
   >
   > *"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life."* Job 2:6
   >
   > *"God is faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* 1 Cor. 10:13

   d. God **can overrule** every expression of sin for His glory.

   > *"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."* Ps. 76:10

   e. God **can restore** the wasted years of a sinful life.

   > *"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten."* Joel 2:25

2. The **free will of man**

   It is a wonderful truth of Scripture that a sovereign God can determine to give man a free choice in the matter of his personal salvation. God did not have to give man this privilege, but the Bible indicates that He did. God never forces Himself upon an individual.

> *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"* Matt. 23:37

> "To allow man such a measure of self-determination is something which only a great and omnipotent God would do. The greater and more supreme He is (coupled with the greatness of His grace), the more He would willingly grant man such restricted freedom of action. Anything short of that would result in a merely mechanical universe, a world of rigid determination. Furthermore, such a mechanistic existence would leave no room for real human responsibility or accountability, or ground for a final judgment, nor would it allow place for any spontaneous response to one's Maker."
>
> *—Samuel Fisk,*
> *Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom,* pp. 51–52.

> "God has a very high regard for freedom. He could have made the creature an automaton, but He preferred to make him capable of choosing whether or not he would obey and serve Him. . . . God graciously restores to all men sufficient ability to make a choice in the matter of submission to Him. This is the salvation-bringing grace of God that has appeared to all men."
>
> *—Henry C. Thiessen,*
> *Lectures in Systematic Theology,* pp. 155, 345.

It is clear from Scripture that God's sovereign will includes the desires of His heart, which He *refuses to force* upon His creation.

> *"The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing [desirous] that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* 2 Peter 3:9

THE TWO HORSEMEN

> "Let us imagine two horsemen. One sits on a horse every movement of which he controls absolutely. The horse does not move a fraction of an inch in any part unless the rider decides it shall move and sees to it that the movement is made. Here we see absolute control. Another man sits on another horse. This horse makes various movements which the rider does not command, does not initiate, cannot even predict in detail. But the rider is in control. The first horse is a hobbyhorse, the second is a spirited five-gaited showhorse. But which is the better horseman? Little Willie, operating his mechanical horse in the corner drugstore, or the prize-winning rider at the horse show? Is it actually more to the credit of God that He shall ride this universe like a hobbyhorse, or like a real, living creature of intelligence and spirit? . . . We Christians will not give up believing in the sovereignty of God. . . . But we do not have to suppose that God cannot be sovereign without robbing His creatures of all their freedom."
>
> *—Dr. Kenneth J. Foreman,*
> *God's Will and Ours,* p. 30. Quoted in Samuel Fisk,
> *Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom,* p. 55.

3. The privilege of prayer

God has allowed Himself to be influenced by the prayers of His children. This is not a privilege which the Christian can demand. God has allowed us this wonderful privilege. If it were not possible to alter a given circumstance, all of God's commandments to pray would be ludicrous, "a stupendous farce, a colossal and cruel satire." —*Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament,* Vo l. III, p. 137.

"If God can, in response to the petition of His confiding child, alter what, without such petition, would have been otherwise, we find ourselves wondering if such a view is not, in comparison with that of absolute predestination, equally honoring to God and quite as stimulating to man. To many it seems far more so." —*Dr. William E. Biederwolf, How Can God Answer Prayer?* third ed., pp. 120–121.

The Scope of God's Sovereignty

1. Sometimes God **decrees** (determines).

   "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined." Luke 22:22

2. Sometimes God **conceals.**

   "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God." Deut. 29:29

3. Sometimes God **recommends.**

   "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God. . . . For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." I Thess. 4:1–3

4. Sometimes God **desires.**

   "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Deut. 5:29

5. Sometimes God **permits.**

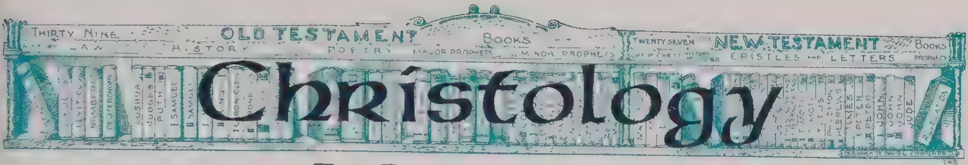
   "And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them." Num. 22:12

   (Later): *"Go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do."* Num. 22:20

6. Sometimes God **considers.**

   "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Jer. 18:8

CHAPTER 3


THIRTY NINE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS
LAW HISTORY POETRY MAJOR PROPHETS MINOR PROPHETS
TWENTY SEVEN NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS
LIFE OF CHRIST HISTORY EPISTLES AND LETTERS PROPHECY

Christology

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

Lesson

17 The Names and Nature of Jesus Christ

Christology is the doctrine of Jesus Christ. It is the study of Christ and His provision of salvation for a lost humanity. It is important that we understand this key doctrine as it relates to our eternal destiny.

It has been said that Christ *is* Christianity. False religions can continue without their leaders; cults can arise and their leaders be soon forgotten. But Christ *is* Christianity. Without Him Christianity has no meaning.

> "The whole substance and strength of the Christian faith centres in Jesus Christ. Without Him there is absolutely nothing." —*Sinclair Patterson*

A. Introduction

Jesus Christ is the theme of Scripture. Every book of the Old Testament foretells His coming. The Gospels give us the account of His life on earth. The Epistles and the book of Revelation reveal that He is coming again. Throughout the Bible God gives us beautiful pictures of Jesus Christ:

> *"God will provide himself a lamb."* Gen. 22:8
>
> *"There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."* Num. 24:17
>
> *"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."* Deut. 18:15
>
> *"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* Matt. 12:40
>
> *"Behold, a greater than Solomon is here."* Matt. 12:42
>
> *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."* John 3:14
>
> *"This [Jesus Christ] is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."* Acts 4:11
>
> *"Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."* Rev. 5:12

His coming to earth in the form of human flesh (the **incarnation**) was prophesied initially in Genesis 3:15, when God said to the serpent:

> *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Gen. 3:15

This passage is called the "first gospel proclamation." It implies a virgin birth ("her seed"), shows the battle lines of the ages, and implies a twofold coming of Christ. (At Christ's first coming His heel was bruised; at His second coming He will bruise the head of Satan.)

The purpose of Christ's incarnation was determined before the foundation of the world.

> *"Him [Jesus Christ], being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."* Acts 2:23
>
> *"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"* Rev. 13:8

Jesus Christ was born to die. He came into this world to die on a cross for our sins so we might have eternal life by trusting in Him.

B. The names of Christ

Whereas Jesus Christ has many names of a general nature, some of His names specifically indicate His deity while others specifically indicate His humanity.

1. **Christ** (John 1:41; 4:25; Matt. 16:16)
   - **a.** This is His official title.
   - **b.** It is the New Testament name for the Old Testament word ***Messiah,*** which means "anointed one."

     In Simon Peter's great confession (Matt. 16:16), he is stating that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah:

     > *"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the living God."* Matt. 16:16
   - **c.** The name *Christ* pictures Jesus in His three offices of **prophet, priest,** and **king.**
     - **(1)** The prophet (Isa. 61:1), priest (Exod. 29:1–7), and king (1 Sam. 16:13) were all anointed.

       > *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek."* Isa. 61:1
       >
       > *"And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them . . . in the priest's office . . . shalt thou . . . anoint him."* Exod. 29:1–7
       >
       > *"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him [King David] in the midst of his brethren."* 1 Sam. 16:13
     - **(2)** Jesus was a Prophet (Luke 24:19), is a Priest (Heb. 4:14), and will be a King (Rev. 19:16).

> *"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."* Luke 24:19
>
> *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, . . . Jesus the Son of God."* Heb. 4:14
>
> *"And he [Jesus Christ] hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."* Rev. 19:16

2. Son of God (Matt. 16:16)

Although some today might suggest that Jesus Christ was only "one of many gods," those who knew Him, whether friend or foe, understood His claim to deity.

> *"Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he [Jesus] said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."* Luke 22:70–71

- **a.** This name indicates Christ's position in the Trinity.
- **b.** It emphasizes His deity.
- **c.** It is the emphasis of John's gospel.

3. Son of Man (John 5:26–27)

- **a.** This is the title Jesus applied to Himself.

  The phrase *Son of man* is found approximately eighty times in the Gospels. With one exception, it is always used by Christ in referring to Himself. In the one exception, John 12:34, He is asked about this "unusual" phrase. Evidently Christ desired to veil His deity until the time was right. As a result He tended to use terms that emphasized His humanity and concealed His deity.

- **b.** This name emphasizes His humiliation. (Heb. 4:15)
- **c.** This name is the emphasis of Luke's gospel.

4. God (Heb. 1:8; John 1:1; Titus 2:13)

> *"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."* Heb. 1:8
>
> *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."* Titus 2:13

The Bible clearly states that Jesus Christ is not a mere man. He is called God because He is God.

5. Lord (Luke 6:46)

One of the strongest testimonials to the deity of Christ was given by Thomas, the apostle who initially doubted the possibility of Christ's resurrection.

> *"And Thomas answered and said unto him [Jesus Christ], My Lord and my God."* John 20:28

- **a.** This title emphasizes His position as the Master, King, and Ruler of our lives.

- **b.** This title deserves obedience and reverence.
- **c.** It is equivalent to the Old Testament "God."

6. Jesus (Matt. 1:21)

- **a.** This is His personal, human name.
- **b.** It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name ***Joshua.***

  Note: The names *Jesus* and *Joshua* are occasionally used interchangeably: Acts 7:45.
- **c.** It means **"Savior"** or **"Salvation."** (Acts 4:12)

7. Immanuel—"God with us" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23)

> *"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel [or Immanuel], which being interpreted is, God with us."* Matt. 1:23

8. Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:22)

Jesus was a Nazarene (from Nazareth), not a Nazarite. Samson, who took a special vow, was a Nazarite (Judg. 13).

9. The Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5)

C. The nature of Christ

1. The **humanity** of Jesus Christ

We speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as being perfect God and perfect man; 100 percent God and 100 percent man. He was as much God as if He were not man at all and as much man as if He were not God at all. Some cults emphasize the humanity of Christ to the exclusion of His deity. But the Scriptures teach both. As a perfect man He can empathize with us in our problems. As perfect God He could die on a cross for the sins of the world. Jesus Christ was both God and man.

a. Jesus Christ was a man.

(1) He had a **human parent.**

Mary is called His mother (Matt. 1:18, 2:11, 13:5). Jesus was born of the seed of a woman (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4). He did not have a human father; Joseph was like a foster father.

(2) He had **human names.**

- **(a)** Jesus
- **(b)** Son of Man
- **(c)** Jesus of Nazareth
- **(d)** The Man Christ Jesus

(3) He had a **human appearance.**

He was Jewish (John 4:9; 20:14–15; 21:4–5).

(4) He possessed the essential elements of a physical nature—**body** (John 19:38–40), **soul** (Mark 14:34), and **spirit** (John 13:21).

(5) He had **human sinless infirmities.**

- (a) Hunger (Matt. 4:2)
- (b) Thirst (John 19:28)
- (c) Fatigue (Matt. 8:24)
- (d) Weariness (John 4:6)
- (e) Agony (Luke 22:44)

(6) He developed in the usual, normal way of human **development.** (Luke 2:40, 52)

b. Jesus Christ had **human characteristics.**

(1) **Humility and love**

- (a) He washed His disciples' feet. (John 13:14–15)
- (b) He laid down His life for His friends. (John 15:13)

(2) **Meekness** (Matt. 11:28–30; 2 Tim. 2:24–25)

Meekness is defined as an attitude of mind opposed to contentiousness. The meek person does not look for a fight, but that does not mean he is incapable of defending himself. When he is afflicted he would rather suffer wrong than do wrong. He seeks not revenge but reverence for God. Meekness is strength under control.

NAMES OF THE LORD, ALPHABETICALLY

Alpha and Omega—Revelation 1:8
Bridegroom—Matthew 9:15
Chief Corner Stone—1 Peter 2:6
Desire of Nations—Haggai 2:7
Emmanuel—Matthew 1:23
Faithful and True—Revelation 19:11
Governor—Matthew 2:6
High Priest—Hebrews 5:10
Intercessor—Isaiah 59:16
Jesus of Nazareth—John 19:19
King of kings—Revelation 19:16
Lamb—Revelation 5:6, 8
Morning Star—Revelation 22:16
Nazarene—Matthew 2:23
Only Begotten Son—John 3:16
Prince—Acts 5:31
  Prince of Peace—Isaiah 9:6
  Prince of Life—Acts 3:15
  Prince of the kings of the earth —Revelation 1:5
Resurrection and Life—John 11:25
Shepherd—1 Peter 2:25
  Good Shepherd—John 10:11
  Great Shepherd—Hebrews 13:20–21
  Chief Shepherd—1 Peter 5:4
Truth—John 14:6
Vine—John 15:1–16
Word of Life—John 1:1

—*Sunday School Times*

Jesus Christ was a perfect example of meekness. Although He had omnipotence in His Being, He controlled it in a true spirit of meekness and humility.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." Isa. 53:7

"And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." Ps. 45:4

"Then said Jesus unto him [Peter], Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Matt. 26:52–53

(3) Balance

Jesus Christ is our example in balance. He could weep over a city (Luke 19:41–44) and a few minutes later cast wicked men out of the temple (Luke 19:45–48). He was a perfect balance of love and justice.

c. Jesus Christ performed **human activities.**

(1) He **prayed.**

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Mark 1:35

If Jesus Christ, who had unbroken fellowship with His Heavenly Father, made time for prayer, how much more should we?

(2) He **worked.** (John 5:17, 36; Matt. 13:54–55; Mark 6:3)

(3) He **learned.**

Although as God Christ is omniscient, as man He willingly kept within Himself certain knowledge so He could legitimately learn information as any normal human being. How He was able to do this is just one of the many mysteries of the Hypostatic Union (Jesus was 100 percent God and 100 percent man).

(a) The Bible says that Christ learned obedience. (Heb. 5:8; Phil. 2:8)

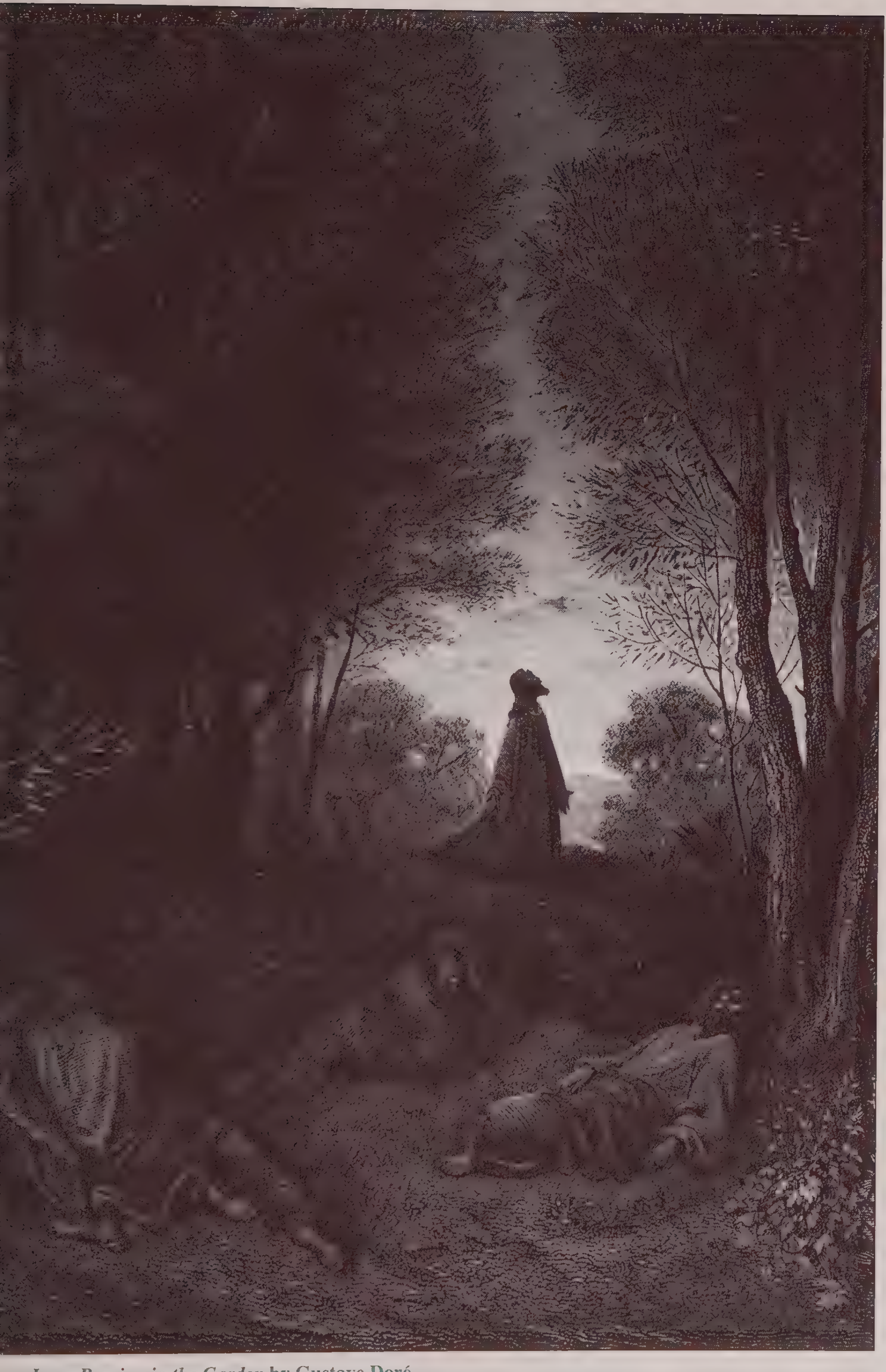
(b) Luke 2:52 indicates that Christ "increased" physically, intellectually, spiritually, and socially.

2. The **deity** of Jesus Christ

a. Jesus Christ performed **divine activities.**

(1) He **created.** (John 1:1–3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:1–2)

"God . . . hath . . . spoken unto us by his Son . . . by whom also he made the worlds." Heb. 1:1–2



Jesus Praying in the Garden **by Gustave Doré**

"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed . . ." *Matt 26:39*

(2) He **forgave sin.** (Matt. 9:1–8)

"Jesus . . . said . . . thy sins be forgiven thee." Matt. 9:2

(3) He **exercised judgment.**

"the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" 2 Tim. 4:1

Unbelievers are often bothered by the picture of the loving Savior as a righteous Judge. But the Bible teaches that holiness is consistent with Christ's character. This holiness demands that all sin be punished. John 5:22 indicates that God "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The picture of Christ at His second coming is quite graphic:

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. . . . And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Rev. 19:13–15

(4) He **was worshiped.**

(a) He accepted worship that was rightfully refused by men (Acts 10:25–26) and angels (Rev. 22:8–9).

This shows that He must have been more than a man or an angel. He must have been God.

(b) He accepted prayers that were made to Him.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." John 14:13–14

(c) He accepted worship as God. (John 5:23; Phil. 2:9–11)

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:9–11

b. He had a **divine conception.** (Matt. 1:20; John 8:42)

c. He had **divine names** (or titles).

(1) God

(2) Son of God

(3) Lord

(4) Immanuel

d. He had a **divine appearance** at will. (Luke 9:27–36)

e. He has **divine characteristics.**

(1) He is **eternal.**

"In the beginning was the Word." John 1:1

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Heb. 13:8

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Heb. 1:8

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Rev. 1:8

(2) He is **omnipresent.**

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20

"Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." John 6:21

(3) He is **omniscient.**

"But he knew their thoughts." Luke 6:8

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." John 1:48

"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." John 2:24–25

(4) He is **omnipotent.**

His miracles proved that He is God (Acts 2:22; Matt. 8:27; Mark 1:27; 2:5–10; John 3:2; 9:33). The motive of Christ's miracles was to demonstrate revealed truth. They were used by Him for three reasons:

(a) To show His deity. (John 20:30–31)

(b) To draw attention to His message. (John 6:26–27)

(c) To show His sovereignty. (Heb. 2:3–4)

All of Christ's miracles were acts of mercy. Twenty-three of His thirty-five miracles were miracles of healing. Four words are used in the New Testament for Christ's miracles (works, wonders, signs, and powers).

(5) He is **immutable.**

"But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Heb. 1:12

"But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." Heb. 7:24

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Heb. 13:8

Lesson

18 The Significance of Christ's Supernatural Life

A. The significance of the virgin birth

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is the great divide between the Bible believer and the skeptic. Since the skeptic cannot deny that a man named Jesus Christ lived, he must attempt to deny any concept that this Jesus was God. His rejection of supernaturalism leads the skeptic to deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. But the Bible believer understands that the Bible teaches such a doctrine and that it is significant to our understanding of salvation itself.

1. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ proves again the reliability of Scripture.

   > *"And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."* Matt. 1:16

   Normally a genealogy such as the one found in Matthew 1 will mention only the names of the fathers. But the above verse makes an important exception. The phrase "of whom" is in the feminine gender, which shows that Christ was physically related only to Mary. Even the smallest of details is accurately recorded in God's infallible Word.

2. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of a wonderful prophecy.

   > *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* Isa. 7:14

3. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is a beautiful expression of the supernatural.

   > *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* Isa. 9:6

   Everything about Jesus Christ was **wonderful.** It would also stand to reason that His birth would be "full of wonder."

4. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ was the means by which He acquired a human nature without affecting His sinless deity.

   > *"And the Word was made flesh."* John 1:14

   > *"Christ Jesus . . . took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."* Phil. 2:5–7

   > *"And the angel answered and said unto her [Mary], The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."* Luke 1:35

   > *"Wherefore when he [Jesus Christ] cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering [for sin] thou wouldest not [need], but a body hast thou prepared me."* Heb. 10:5

5. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ allowed Him to avoid the curse of Jeconiah.

In Jeremiah 22:24–30 we have an interesting account of a man by the name of Jeconiah or Coniah. (1 Chronicles 3:16–19 shows that "Coniah" was simply a contracted form of "Jeconiah.") Jeconiah is important because he is found in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus Christ.

> *"And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel . . . And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."* Matt. 1:11–16

But Jeremiah 22:24–30 indicates that Jeconiah was so wicked that God finally placed a curse upon him.

> *"Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless [from this day forward], a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."* Jer. 22:30

Normally this would not seem to be a problem except for the fact that Matthew 1 reveals Jesus Christ came through the line of Jeconiah and Jesus ***will*** sit upon the throne of His father David.

Evidently before this curse Jeconiah had had some children. One is mentioned in Matthew 1:12 by the name of Salathiel. But the stress of the curse is that none of ***his seed*** could ever sit upon David's throne. In order to inherit the throne, Jesus Christ had to be **legally** related to Jeconiah, but because of the curse He could not be **physically** ("his seed") related to Jeconiah.

The book of Matthew gives Jesus' *legal line* through Joseph.
(Matt. 1:1–17)

The book of Luke gives Jesus' *physical line* through Mary.
(Luke 3:23–38)

Here's how the virgin birth of Jesus Christ solved the dilemma. Jesus was physically related only to Mary, who was a descendant of David's son, Nathan (Luke 3:31). However, Jesus was legally related to Joseph, who was a descendant of David's son, Solomon (Matt. 1:6). By being legally married before Christ was born, Joseph and Mary were used by God to avert the curse of Jeconiah while at the same time establishing the Christ-child in the royal line of David.

The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived

Here is a man who was born in a lowly manger, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in an obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never went to college. He never owned a house. He never had a family. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where he was born.

He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness.

He had no credentials but himself.

He had nothing to do with this world except the power of his divine manhood.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him.

He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth while he was dying—his coat.

When he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed tomb through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone. Today he is the center-piece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress.

I am within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has THAT ONE SOLITARY LIFE.

—*Phillips Brooks*

B. The significance of Christ's two natures

1. The incarnation is essential to the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement.
2. Christ must have been **perfectly human.**
   - **a.** Man sinned; therefore, the penalty had to be borne by a Man.
   - **b.** Christ had to be a sinless Man in order to atone for sin.

The first man, Adam, had the ability to be sinless, but he failed. The "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), Jesus Christ, was able to be sinless, and He succeeded. For over thirty-three years Jesus Christ lived a perfect life on earth, succeeding where Adam had failed. He thereby was able to die for the sin of mankind and to restore the position of man lost in Adam's fall.

> *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, . . . Jesus the Son of God . . . [who] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* Heb. 4:14–15
>
> *"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."* Heb. 7:26

> *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."*
>
> 1 Pet. 2:21–24

c. Only a truly **human** mediator could enter empathetically into our trials and be a perfect example to follow. He should be to us a perfect example:

(1) of **love** (Matt. 5:39; John 15:12–13; 1 Cor. 13:1–8)

(2) of **patience** (Heb. 12:2)

(3) of **humility** (John 13:3–5; Phil. 2:5–8)

(4) of **soulwinning** (John 4)

(5) of **triumph** over temptation (Matt. 4)

Jesus was victorious over temptation without using His divine power. He merely quoted Scripture to the Devil, a defense that all of us must use.

> *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."* Ps. 119:11

3. Christ had to be **God.**

a. His sacrifice had to be of infinite value. He could die for the world (1 John 2:2) by dying for Adam (Rom. 5:12).

b. He bore the wrath of God redemptively so as to free mankind.

c. He was able to apply His work on the cross to needy humanity.

4. The acceptance of the deity of Christ is necessary to salvation.

There are those today who would have us believe that we can accept a totally human Christ as our example in life. But He cannot truly be our example until He is first our Savior. And He cannot be our Savior until we accept His deity. In John 8:24 Christ says these words:

> *"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."*

By His saying, "I am," He was clearly indicating His deity. This is seen in John 8:58–59:

> *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him."*

Those Jews knew exactly what Jesus was claiming when he said, "I am." They had read Exodus 3:14. And Jesus said in John 8:24 that a person will die in his sins unless he believes in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT MEN HAVE SAID ABOUT THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Napoleon Bonaparte

I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity. . . . Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and his will confounds me. Between him and whoever else in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by himself. His ideas and sentiments, the truth which he announces, his manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things. . . . The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, everything is above me—everything remains grand, of a grandeur which overpowers. His religion is a revelation from an intelligence which certainly is not that of man. . . . One can absolutely find nowhere, but in him alone, the imitation or the example of his life. . . . I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ, or anything which can approach the gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature, offer me anything with which I am able to compare it or to explain it. Here everything is extraordinary."

—*Napoleon,* cited by Vernon C. Grounds, *The Reason for Our Hope* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1945), p. 37.

C. S. Lewis

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. . . . "

"You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing non-sense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

—*C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1960), pp. 40–41.

Lesson 19 The Humiliation of Jesus Christ

The humiliation of Jesus Christ is defined as those self-humbling desires that caused Him to leave the glories of Heaven, live on this sin-cursed earth, and die on an old rugged cross. His **humiliation** begins with His incarnation and ends with His burial. His **exaltation** begins with His resurrection and continues throughout all eternity.

A. The humiliation of Christ began with His incarnation.

1. Christ made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant.

> *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* Phil. 2:5–8

Jesus limited Himself and yet never ceased to be God; He willingly kept within Himself much of His power. He endured life as a human being in order to understand our trials.

2. Christ dwelt in the midst of sinful men.

The blessing of the incarnation is "God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

The blessing of heaven will also be "God with us" (Rev. 21:3).

3. Christ was born in humble Bethlehem. (Mic. 5:2)

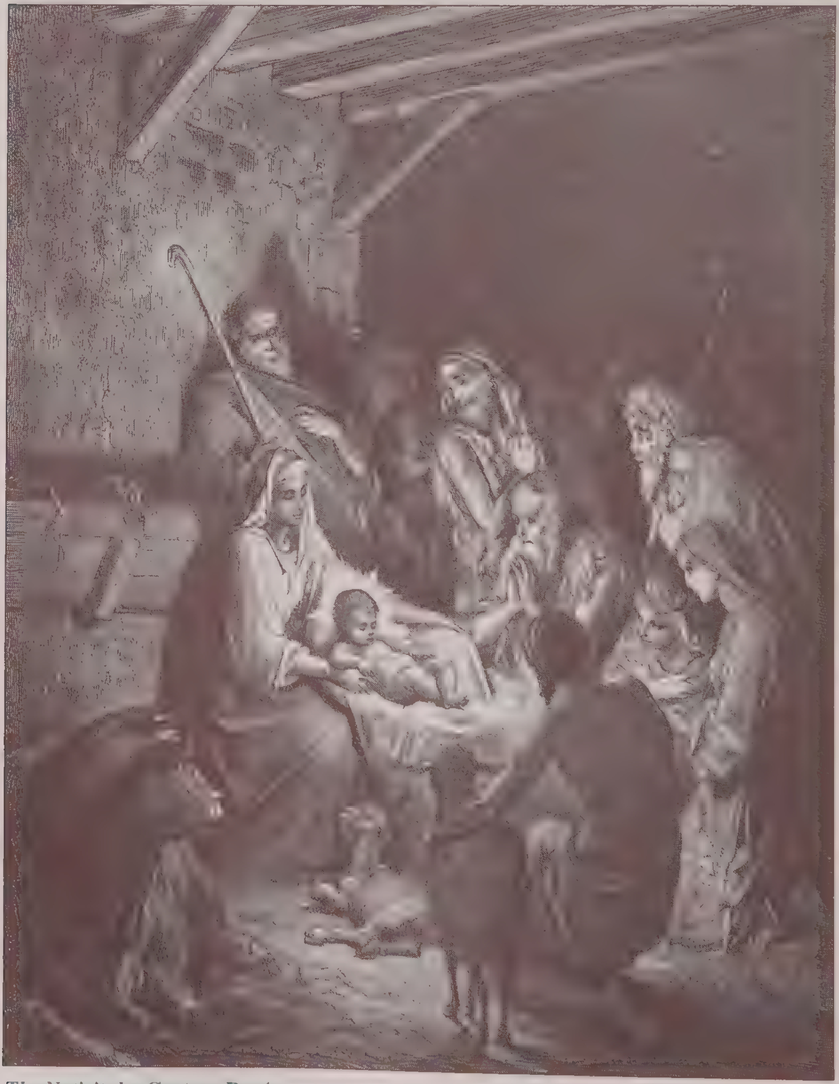
Bethlehem is called "little among the thousands of Judah," and yet to this insignificant place Christ was born.

4. Christ was born in a humble stable. (Luke 2:16)

Often the picture we have of the manger scene is far more glamorous than the reality of it. Our typical perspective includes a few cows, a wooden crib, sweet-smelling hay, freshly groomed shepherds, a star, and three wise men. Nothing could be further from the truth. Cattle are rare to Palestine; the wise men came two years later; the star hovered over the *house* where the Christ-child was found by the wise men; and the manger was most likely a stone feeding trough located in a stone cave, not a wooden stable. These caves were common throughout Palestine and were used for housing sheep while they were lambing.

The cave in which the Christ-child was born was probably adjacent to the crowded Bethlehem inn. It was customary for the innkeeper in Bible times not only to take care of the guest but also to provide for the horse or donkey which he had ridden to the inn. The cave in which Christ was born was probably a combination sheep-cote and "parking garage" for the inn itself. Therefore, if the inn was full on the night of Christ's birth, it would follow that the "parking garage" would also be packed with crowded, smelly animals.

We cannot imagine the humiliation of the night that Mary, Joseph, and the newborn Christ-child spent there. The stench was surely unbearable. It must have been nauseating to Mary and Joseph. Perhaps Joseph tried to clean up one corner of the cave to make it at least livable for a few days. During the day the animals would graze on the nearby hillsides, but at night they all crowded back into that same dark cave. What condescension Christ suffered for us!



***The Nativity* by Gustave Doré**

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." *Luke 2:7*

> *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."* 2 Cor. 8:9

B. The humiliation of Christ continued in His early life.

1. He was the son of poor Jewish parents.

> *"Is not this the carpenter's son?"* Matt. 13:55
>
> *"They brought him [Christ] to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; . . . And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."* Luke 2:22–24
>
> *"This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female. And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles [doves], or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering."* Lev. 12:7–8

By comparing the passage in Luke with the one in Leviticus, we can see that Mary and Joseph were not wealthy, but of a very low income. An average-income family would offer a lamb; poorer families brought turtledoves and pigeons. One bird was offered for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. It should also be noted that these were offered on behalf of Mary, not Christ. The sinless Son of God did not need a sin offering made on His behalf.

2. He was raised in Nazareth.

The Bible seems to indicate that the town of Nazareth was not viewed in a favorable light.

> *"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"* John 1:46

3. He was in subjection to human beings—His mother and foster father. (Luke 2:51)

4. He was willingly subject to the limitations of a human body.

Although Jesus Christ was God, He did not use His divine power indiscriminately. When He did use His power, it was for the benefit of another. But until He began His ministry, He used no miraculous power. John 2:11 indicates that the turning of the water into wine was the "beginning of [His] miracles."

In spite of the Bible's clear teaching, some ancient apocryphal writings suggested that the young child Jesus "showed off" to His friends by performing miraculous "tricks" for their benefit. One such writer has Him turning clay pigeons into real birds to frustrate His teachers. Another writer suggested that He once turned a wicked schoolmate into stone to the delight of His friends. Such writings are not inspired and are not accurate. The Bible reveals that Jesus exercised patience and self-control in the first 30 years of His life. He willingly subjected Himself to the limitations of His human body.

C. The humiliation of Christ continued throughout His earthly ministry.

1. He suffered hunger and thirst. (Matt. 4:1–7; 27:48)

   Although He never met His own needs miraculously, He made sure others would not hunger (John 6:1–4) or thirst (John 4:6–15).

2. He was tried (tempted) continually.

   > *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted [tried] like as we are, yet without sin."* Heb. 4:15

   The word *tempted* should probably be translated *tried.* This often is the case throughout Scripture. See James 1:1–12. Christ could not be "tempted to sin" in all the ways that we are.

   > *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."* James 1:14

   Christ could not be tempted to sin from within (lust). His temptation could only come from without. But those temptations from without were not victorious in the life of Christ. Christ is our great empathetic (characterized by the ability to share in another's feelings) High Priest because He was sinless. Sin mars an individual's ability to understand another's feelings. Our best empathy will come from a life separated from sin, not involved in sin. Christ **can** understand our trials; He cannot understand our inner sinful desires.

3. He was rejected by His own people.

   > *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."* John 1:11

4. He was often without suitable housing.

   > *"And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."* Matt. 8:20

   Where did Jesus stay while He was on earth? It seems that He stayed with different individuals (Luke 10:38–42). He possibly stayed with different disciples. 1 Corinthians 9:5 seems to indicate that most of the apostles were married and had families.

   > *"Have we not power [the right] to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?* 1 Cor. 9:5

5. He was blasphemed.

   > *"But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils."* Luke 11:15

6. He was made lower than the angels. (Heb. 2:6–8)

D. The humiliation of Christ intensified during the week of His crucifixion.

1. He lived to be only 33 years of age. (Luke 3:23ff)

Suggested Time Line of Christ's Ministry

Age 30 (Lk. 3:23)	Age 31	Age 32	Age 33	Age 33+
Matt. 3:1–4:1 Mark 1:2–13 Luke 3:1–4:13 John 1:9–2:12	John 2:13–4:54	Matt. 4:12–14:12 Mark 1:4–6:29 Luke 3:19–9:9	Matt. 14:13–20:34 Mark 6:30–10:52 Luke 9:10–19:28 John 6:5–11:57	
Passover (John 2:13)	**Passover** (John 5:1)	**Passover** (John 6:4)	**Passover** (John 11:55)	

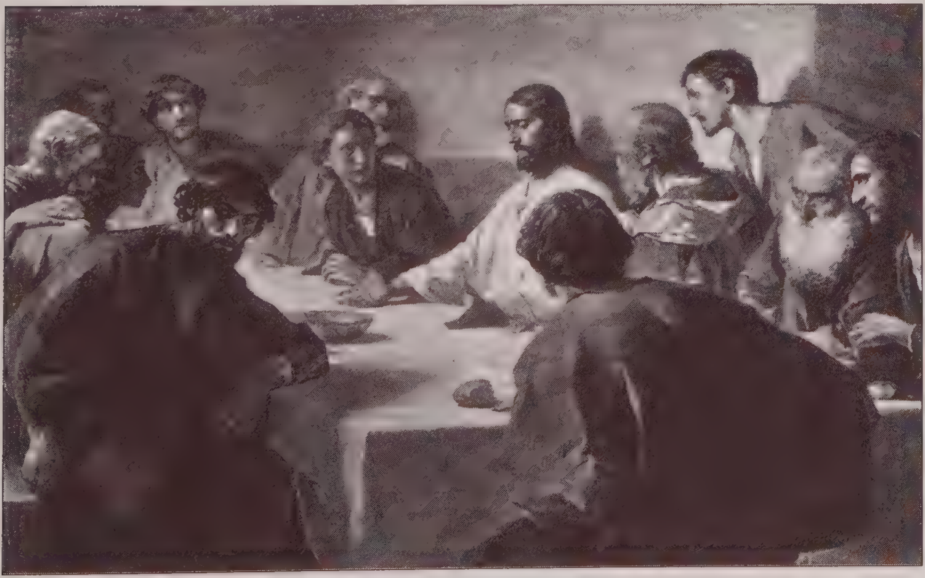
2. He rode on a borrowed donkey.

> *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jersusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."* Zech. 9:9

> *"And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon."* Matt. 21:6–7

3. He borrowed an upper room during the Passover.

> *"And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, the Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready."* Luke 22:11–12



The Last Supper by E. Zimmermann

4. He was betrayed for a slave's price.

> *"If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."* Exod. 21:32

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." Matt. 26:14–15

5. He was tortured unmercifully. (Matt. 27:26–56; Mark 15:7–41; Luke 23:13–49; John 19:1–37)

6. His followers denied Him.

"Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled." Matt. 26:56

"And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not." John 18:25

E. The humiliation of Christ culminated in His burial in a borrowed tomb. Matt. 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:31–42

"And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand." John 19:38–42

* * *

Lesson

20 The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the climax of history. The Old Testament prepared us for it; the New Testament explained its significance. This lesson will discuss the events leading up to and culminating in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ for a world desperately in need of a Savior.

A. The court trial of Jesus Christ was illegal.

The court trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin was grossly illegal. Yet we must remember that **no fair trial** could ever have condemned the perfect Son of God. God can use the wrath of men to praise Him (Ps. 76:10). Jesus was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23).

1. The events on the night of the betrayal of Jesus actually included **three different "trials":**

- **a.** Christ was first brought before Annas and the Sanhedrin at night.

  It was during the night that Simon Peter denied the Lord three times. (Luke 22:54–62; John 18:12–24)

- **b.** Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas (the High Priest) and the Sanhedrin at dawn. (Luke 22:66; John 18:24, 28)

- **c.** The Sanhedrin then led Jesus from its council to Pilate the Roman governor in the early morning hours. (John 18:28–31)

2. The **illegalities of Christ's trial**

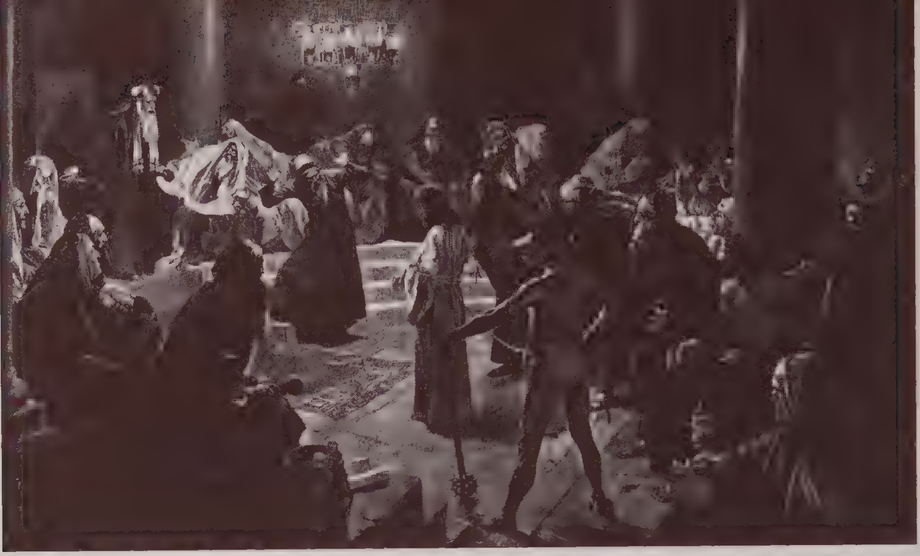
The following is a list of a few of the illegalities of which the Sanhedrin and the high priest were guilty. Mark 15:10 reminds us of their motives: "For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy."

- **a.** The Sanhedrin met before the morning sacrifice.

  This was illegal. They met at night to quickly push through a verdict of guilty. (The reason for such a self-imposed regulation as waiting till after the morning sacrifice should be obvious. The Jewish people wanted to make sure these men of the Sanhedrin were "right with God" before they handed down important decisions.)

- **b.** The Sanhedrin was not to meet on Fridays (the day before the Sabbath) or before feast days regarding issues of capital punishment.

  Since an issue of capital punishment may have required the Sanhedrin to reconvene the next day, they imposed this rule to keep from meeting on a Sabbath or a feast day.



"Guilty of Death" **by Gebhard Fugel**—The mock trial of Jesus before the hypocritical Jewish Sanhedrin

c. The witnesses did not agree. (Mark 14:56–59)

Being a witness was considered a serious matter to the Sanhedrin. In matters of capital punishment he was strongly challenged by a member of the Sanhedrin to tell the truth.

WARNING TO THE WITNESS

"Forget not, O witness, that it is one thing to give evidence in a trial as to money and another in a trial for life. In a money suit, if the witness-bearing shall do wrong, money may repair that wrong. But in this trial of life, if thou sinnest, the blood of the accused and the blood of his seed to the end of time shall be imputed unto thee. . . . Therefore was Adam created one man and alone, to teach thee that if any witness shall destroy one soul out of Israel, he is held by the Scripture to be as if he had destroyed the world; and he who saves one such soul to be as if he had saved the world."

—cited by *Walter M. Chandler, The Trial of Jesus from a Lawyer's Standpoint* (Norcross, Georgia: The Harrison Company, Publishers, 1976), p. 79.

But what if the witness was guilty of perjury? The Old Testament gives us the answer:

> *"And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you."*
>
> Deut. 19:18–19

Note: The ones who should have been crucified the day Jesus died were the witnesses who falsely accused Him.

THE JEWISH SANHEDRIN

The main part of the "trial" of Jesus occurred before the Jewish Sanhedrin. This was the Jewish court of law. The Sanhedrin consisted of the following men (Mark 14:53):

2	presiding officers
23	chief priests
23	elders
23	scribes
71	total members

These Jewish leaders were considered experts in many fields. They had to be well versed in science, medicine, chemistry, and foreign languages. Since an interpreter was not allowed in the court, at least three members of the Sanhedrin had to be fluent in the language of each witness. History records that two Sanhedrins (one at Bither and another at Jabneh) had at least three members who knew all the known languages of their section of the world. These men were definitely not unlearned. The chief priests were experts in the moral law, the elders in the civil law, and the scribes in the ceremonial law.

The Sanhedrin imposed strict regulations upon itself in order to keep an innocent man from being unjustly accused. There was no such thing as circumstantial evidence. At least two witnesses were required to condemn a man. The Sanhedrin would not accept testimony from women, slaves, idiots, minors, blind men, gamblers, relatives, or Gentiles. The witnesses were isolated from each other until their time to testify. They then testified individually and before the accused. The witnesses had to agree in every minute detail of their testimonies or the accusations were rejected.

The accused could testify before the Sanhedrin, but it was not required. The accused individual's own confession was insufficient for his condemnation.

The Jewish Sanhedrin was not allowed to execute criminals for any crime. The Romans made it clear that they, not the Jews, had ultimate sovereignty at that time. Not only that, but at the time Christ was crucified the Jewish people had practically done away with capital punishment. The Mishna (Jewish law code) of that day stated: "The Sanhedrin which so often as once in seven years condemns a man to death, is a slaughterhouse."

After the witnesess had completed their testimonies, the Sanhedrin began its voting procedures. Each member in turn stood and gave his verdict with a proper explanation. The youngest members always voted first so as not to be influenced by the elder members of the Sanhedrin. Each succeeding member had to give arguments that were distinctively different from the previous members or his vote was not considered worthy of independent thinking.

In cases of capital punishment, the Sanhedrin was required to reconvene 24 hours later and vote again. If a member had voted "not guilty" the day before, he could not change his vote. But if he had voted "guilty" the day before he could change his verdict to "not guilty." (Again, this was to protect the accused. Often after a good night's rest, a Sanhedrin member would become more benevolent.)

d. The High Priest was forbidden to tear his clothes.

> *"And he that is the high priest among his brethren . . . shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes."* Lev. 21:10

> *"Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?"* Mark 14:63

e. Christ's defense was never allowed.

f. The judges should have been disqualified because of previous knowledge of the case.

Note: They had met on three previous occasions to conspire against Him.

g. The Sanhedrin never reconvened the next day.

Note: In reality they reconvened a few hours later at dawn.

h. The Sanhedrin constantly changed the charge against Jesus.

(1) The first accusation was **sedition.**

> *"We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands."* Mark 14:58

What Christ actually said in John 2:19.

> *"Jesus answered and said unto them, [You] Destroy this temple [of my body—vs. 21], and in three days I will raise it up."*

(2) The second accusation was **blasphemy.**

> *"Then the high priest . . . saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?"* Mark 14:63–64

(3) The third accusation was **treason.**

> *"And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King."* Luke 23:1–2

i. According to Jewish law, a unanimous verdict of guilty was considered an acquittal (a setting free).

This is one of the most amazing aspects of Jewish law, but it is not without some logic. A unanimous and simultaneous verdict of guilty was considered a verdict lacking in mercy. It was thought to be the result of a conspiracy and mob violence rather than mature judicial deliberation. Christ's trial was indeed the result of a conspiracy.

> *"Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death."* Mark 14:64

B. The treatment of Jesus Christ was most severe.

On pages 151–152 is a doctor's medical description of the suffering of Jesus during His crucifixion. It is given not to be sensational but to give each of us a new appreciation of the true humiliation of our precious Savior.

A MEDICAL DESCRIPTION

The physical trauma of Christ begins in Gethsemane with one of the initial aspects of His suffering—the bloody sweat. It is interesting that the physician of the group, St. Luke, is the only one to mention this. He says, "And being in agony, He prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of loose blood, trickling down upon the ground."

Though very rare, the phenomenon of hemathidrosis, or bloody sweat, is well documented. Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process alone could have produced marked weakness and possible shock.

After the arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas, the High Priest. A soldier struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiaphas. The palace guards then blindfolded Him and mockingly taunted Him to identify them as they each passed by, spat on Him, and struck Him in the face.

In the early morning, Jesus, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, is taken across Jerusalem to the Praetorium of the Fortress Antonia. It was there, in response to the cries of the mob, that Pilate ordered Bar-Abbas released and condemned Jesus to scourging and crucifixion.

Preparations for the scourging are carried out. The prisoner is stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the flagrum in his hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back, and legs.

At first the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises which are broken open by subsequent blows.

Finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped.

The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers see a great joke in this provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a scepter. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns is pressed into His scalp.

Again there is copious bleeding (the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body). After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, they tire of their sadistic sport and the robe is torn from his back. This had already become adherent to the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, and its removal, just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage, causes excruciating pain—almost as though He were again being whipped, and the wounds again begin to bleed.

The heavy beam of the cross is then tied across His shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves and the execution detail, begins its slow journey. The weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss, is too much. He stumbles and falls. The rough wood of the beam gouges into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders. He tries to rise, but human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance.

At Golgotha, the beam is placed on the ground and Jesus is quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The beam is then lifted in place at the top of the posts and the titulus reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" is nailed in place.

The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid the stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen.

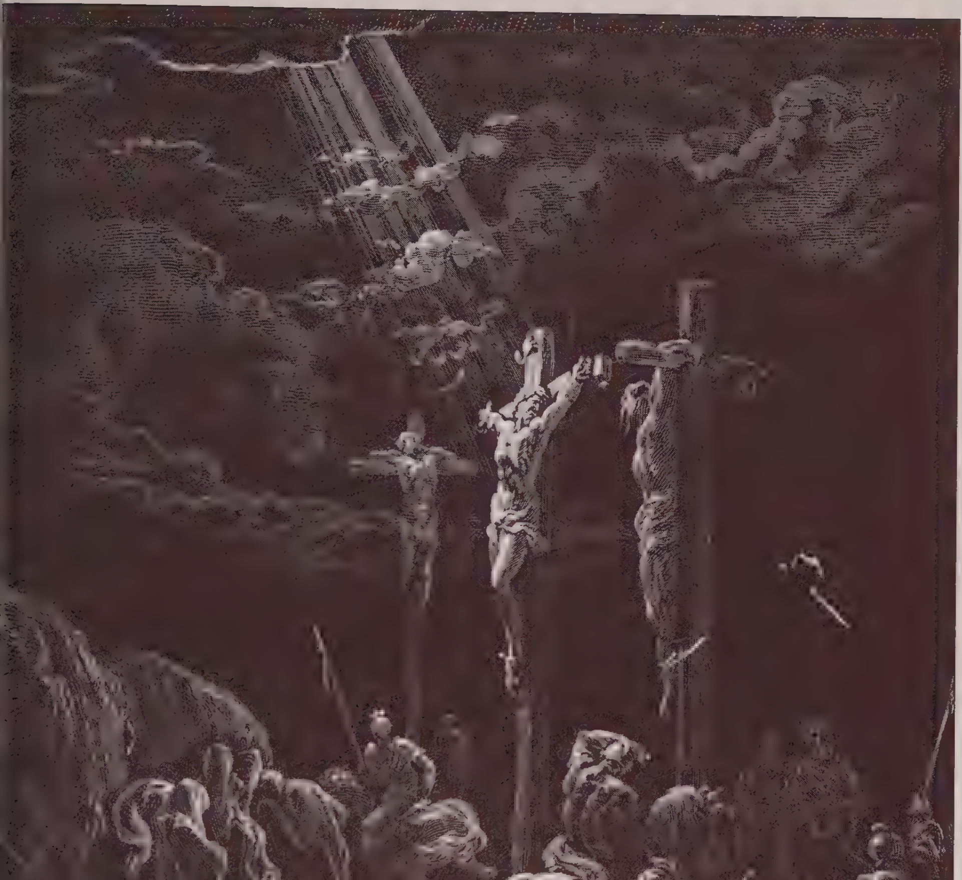
Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphixiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

The compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues—the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain. Jesus gasps, "I thirst."

He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. With one last surge of strength, He once again presses His torn feet against the nail, straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and last cry, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Apparently to make doubly sure of death, the legionnaire drove his lance through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the pericardium and into the heart. Immediately there came out blood and water. We, therefore, have rather conclusive post-mortem evidence that Our Lord died, not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.

—Condensed from "The Crucifixion of Jesus" by C. Truman Davis., M.D., M.S. March, 1965 and quoted by Bill Gothard in *Men's Manual*, Institute in Basic Life Principles, Box One, Oak Brook, Ill. 60521, pp. 146–147. Reprinted by permission of Arizona Medical Association and Institute in Basic Life Principles, Inc.



***The Crucifixion* by Gustave Doré**

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." *John 3:16-18*

C. The suffering of Jesus Christ was more than physical.

1. He died in the presence of sinners.

   "They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion." Ps. 22:13

   "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me." Ps. 22:16–17

2. He suffered tremendous shame and embarrassment.

   "I [Jesus Christ] hid not my face from shame and spitting." Isa. 50:6

   "Looking unto Jesus . . . who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." Heb. 12:2

   "And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head." Matt. 27:28–30

   "And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors." Mark 15:27–28

   "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Isa. 53:7

3. He was forsaken by God the Father. (Ps. 22:1)

   When Jesus Christ took our sins upon Himself, a holy God could no longer look upon His Son. Up to that point Jesus addressed God as "Father." But as Jesus became sin for us, a change took place. Jesus could no longer call Him "Father," as Jesus on the cross was totally forsaken by God. In agony, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" At the ninth hour He cried, "It is finished," and the fellowship of Father and Son was restored. Jesus continued, "**Father,** into thy hands I commend my spirit."

4. He bore the sins of every man.

   "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Heb. 2:9

   "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. 2:24

5. He suffered an eternity in hell for every man.

   When Adam sinned he died spiritually (he was separated from God). Therefore, when Jesus Christ died on the cross, it was necessary for Him to pay the "wages of sin," which is eternal separation from God in hell. From 12 noon to 3 p.m. Jesus suffered all the agony of hell for all mankind compacted into that three hour time span. Only an eternal God could do that. It is no wonder He cried out in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" One of the most sobering verses in all the Bible reminds us of the results of God's turning His back on His only Son:

> *"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, . . . Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."* 2 Thess. 1:8-9

GOD'S GREATEST EXPRESSION OF LOVE

"The greatest example of one laying down his life for his friends is Christ. We can never fully comprehend the spiritual aspect of Christ's suffering and shame, but medical studies shed glimpses of light on the physical agony and all the horror that Jesus endured on the cross.

> *'For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.'* Hebrews 12:3
>
> *'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'* John 15:13
>
> "If you are to truly love and make each member of your family successful, you must be willing to lay down your life on a daily basis and 'die' for them. This means putting the needs of your family first, above your rights, personal ambitions, and schedule."
>
> —*Men's Manual,* Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts,
> Box One, Oak Brook, Ill. 60521, pp. 146–147.

Lesson

21 The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

A. The doctrine of the resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the act by which He, of His own will, came back to life bodily after His death and burial. It is of paramount importance to understand what the Bible teaches about this key doctrine.

1. The **nature** of the resurrection

   a. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a **bodily resurrection.**

   The Bible does not teach that it was merely Christ's spirit or influence that lived on. His was a bodily resurrection. On resurrection morning He was held by the feet (Matt. 28:9). One week later Thomas was able to touch the crucifixion scars of Jesus (John 20:25–28). In the presence of His disciples Jesus ate food (Luke 24:41–43). He was recognized by those who had known Him before His death (Luke 24:34–39). The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the guarantee that someday we will experience a bodily resurrection.

   > *"So when this corruptible [body] shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal [body] shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."*
   > 1 Cor. 15:54

   b. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a **unique resurrection.**

   Others, like Lazarus, also experienced a resurrection. What made the resurrection of Jesus different? First, he was resurrected by His own power.

   > *"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."* John 10:17–18

   Secondly, Christ's resurrection was unique because he arose, never to die again. Those who experienced resurrections during Bible times died a second time. They had not received a glorified body as yet.

   Christ's resurrection was unique because through Him all will someday experience a resurrection.

   > *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."* John 11:25
   >
   > *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."* 1 Cor. 15:20
   >
   > *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."* John 5:28–29

2. The **importance** of the resurrection

a. The resurrection of Jesus Christ and the claims of Christianity stand, or fall, together.

> *"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain. . . . Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."* 1 Cor. 15:12–19

b. The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of our resurrection.

> *"Jesus said unto her [Martha], I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."* John 11:25–26
>
> *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."* 1 Cor. 15:20
>
> *"In Christ shall all be made alive."* 1 Cor. 15:22
>
> *"Because I live, ye shall live also."* John 14:19

c. Christ's claims would be worthless if He did not rise from the dead.

> *"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must . . . be killed, and be raised again the third day."* Matt. 16:21
>
> *"Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."* Matt. 17:9
>
> *"Jesus said . . . and the third day he shall be raised again."* Matt. 17:22–23
>
> *"And Jesus . . . said . . . and the third day he shall rise again."* Matt. 20:17–19
>
> *"But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."* Matt. 26:32
>
> *"When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."* John 2:22

d. The resurrection is a vital part of the gospel.

> *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you. . . . How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."* 1 Cor. 15:1–4

e. The resurrection is a key doctrine of Christianity.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the theme of the apostles' preaching in the book of Acts (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10;10:40; 13:30–37; 17:31) as well as of the apostle Paul's letters to the first century churches (Rom. 4:24; 6:4, 9; 7:4; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:4; 2 Cor. 4:14; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; Col. 2:12; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:8).

B. False teachings against the resurrection

An excellent way to see the strength of the evidence supporting the supernatural resurrection of Jesus Christ is to observe the ridiculous lengths to which the skeptic will go in attempting to disprove this key doctrine. Our confidence in God's Word is increased as we see man's meager attempts to discredit the Bible.

God used those who hated Christ the most to show that no trickery was involved. The zeal of the chief priests and Pharisees (Matt. 27:62–66) gave antagonistic confirmation to the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These four ideas of the skeptics came about as a result of their denial of a supernatural resurrection. As always happens when men reject the truth, the stories of these men are foolishness to those who know the Scriptures.

1. The theft lie

a. The skeptics' argument

According to this oldest lie about the resurrection, disciples stole Christ's body while the soldiers slept to make it look like a resurrection. The religious authorities paid the soldiers to tell this lie—Matthew 28:11–15.

b. The Scripture's answer

(1) It admits that the tomb of Jesus was empty.

If the theory can be disproved, it gives more credence to a resurrection. This shows the illogical position into which a skeptic is forced when he rejects the plain teaching of God's Word.

(2) It was the very thing the soldiers were guarding against. (Matt. 27:62–66)

These soldiers would not have been inexperienced. They were either some of the best soldiers Rome had or they were a part of the carefully chosen Temple guard. If they couldn't defend the grave against a group of fishermen, then no one could!

(3) Falling asleep on watch was punishable by death for a Roman sentinel.

It is amazing that **any** guard would admit such miserable failure. Even if the guard were a Jewish temple guard, he was still held accountable to Pilate.

"Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you." Matt. 28:13–14

(4) If the soldiers were sleeping, how could they say the **disciples** stole the body?

"The lie for which the priests paid so much money is suicidal; one half destroys the other. Sleeping sentinels could not know what happened." *—A. B. Bruce*

(5) It is nowhere suggested that the disciples were ever accused by any authority of stealing the body of Jesus.

Even though the lie was regularly told ("commonly reported among the Jews until this day"— Matt. 28:15), there is no record of anyone being convicted of theft. It should be obvious that the authorities of Christ's day knew the **absurdity** of such a claim.

Tertullian, in his *Apologeticus,* says: "The fame of our Lord's remarkable resurrection and ascension being now spread abroad, Pontius Pilate, according to an ancient custom of communicating novel occurrences to the emperor, that nothing might escape him, transmitted to Tiberius, Emperor of Rome, an account of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. . . . Tiberius referred the whole matter to the Senate, who, being unacquainted with the facts, rejected it." The accuracy of this passage has not been challenged, even by those who staunchly reject the resurrection.

(6) The graveclothes testified to the impossibility of theft. (John 20:1–8)

What did John "see" that caused him to "believe" a resurrection had taken place? The answer is found in the presence of the linen burial clothes. If the disciples had taken His body, why would they have taken the time to remove the graveclothes?

"The graveclothes lying orderly in their place . . . made it evident that the sepulchre had not been rifled nor the body stolen by violent hands; for these garments and spices would have been of more value to thieves . . . at least, they would have not taken the trouble thus to fold them together. The same circumstances showed also that the body had not been removed by friends; for they would not thus have left the graveclothes behind." *—Simon Greenleaf, Testimony of the Evangelists, Examined by the Rules of Evidence Administered in Courts of Justice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965 rep. of 1847 ed.), p. 542.

But what exactly did John see?

"And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." John 20:7

This indicated a resurrection. This would only be the arrangement if Christ's body had passed **through** the graveclothes and through the tomb. We know that this was the ability of Christ's post-resurrection body (see John 20:19, 26). The stone was not rolled away so Jesus could get out; the stone was rolled away so that the disciples could see in! In a split second of time Jesus arose and the graveclothes collapsed or were like a large linen cocoon. And the separate napkin, separated naturally from the rest of the linen by a few inches, would be definitely "in a place by itself."

(7) The disciples did not expect a resurrection and therefore would have no need to fake one.

> *"But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done."* Luke 24:21
>
> *"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit."* Luke 24:36–37

(8) The disciples would not have died a martyr's death for the sake of a lie.

> *"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."* Acts 12:1–2

THEY DIED FOR THE TRUTH

According to early historians, the apostles died the following martyrs' deaths:

1. **Peter** was crucified upside down.
2. **Andrew** was crucified.
3. **James** the son of Zebedee was killed by the sword.
4. **John** died a natural death, although he was persecuted and exiled by Domitian.
5. **Philip** was crucified.
6. **Bartholomew** was crucified.
7. **Thomas** was thrust through with a spear.
8. **Matthew** was killed by the sword.
9. **James** the son of Alphaeus was crucified.
10. **Thaddaeus** was killed by arrows.
11. **Simon** the Zealot was crucified.
12. **Paul** was beheaded.

The resurrection "was the belief that turned heartbroken followers of a crucified rabbi into the courageous witnesses and martyrs of the early church. This was the one belief that separated the followers of Jesus from the Jews and turned them into the community of the resurrection. You could imprison them, flog them, kill them, but you could not make them deny their conviction that 'on the third day he rose again.'" *—Michael Green,* "Editor's Preface" in George Eldon Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975).

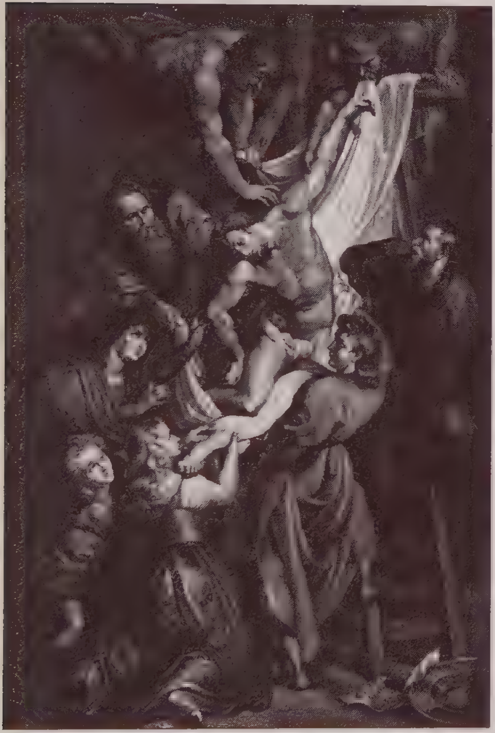
2. The swoon story

a. The skeptics' argument

According to this false teaching, Jesus never actually died on the cross. He just "fainted" and then the cool air of the tomb and the embalming spices revived Him from this unconscious state.

b. The Scripture's answer

(1) The soldiers, Joseph, and Nicodemus testified to His death.



The Removal From the Cross
by **Peter Paul Rubens** (d. 1640)

(a) The soldiers (Mark 15:44–45; John 19:31–37)

This particular group probably had much experience at executions. They certainly would not make a mistake that crucial.

(b) Joseph

"This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre." Luke 23:52–53

(c) Nicodemus

"And there came also Nicodemus. . . . Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices." John 19:39–40

(2) Victims of a crucifixion seldom recovered, even under the most favorable of circumstances of burial.

> "Do you really believe that lying for hour after hour with no medical attention in a rock-hewn tomb in Palestine at Easter, when it's quite cold at night, would so far have revived him, instead of proving the inevitable end to his flickering life, that he would have been able to loose himself from yards of graveclothes weighted with pounds of spices, roll away a stone that three women felt incapable of tackling, and walk miles on wounded feet?" —*J. N. D. Anderson,*
> "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ"
> *Christianity Today,* March 29, 1968, p. 7.

(3) A weak, anemic appearance to His disciples would not have inspired their worship as it did. (John 20:19–31)

On the very Sunday of His resurrection Jesus walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–18) and back again (Luke 24:33–36). The total distance of that trip would have been approximately 120 furlongs, or 13 miles. That would be an amazing amount of walking for anyone, let alone an individual who had "almost" died a few days earlier.

◆

(4) It would make Jesus a wicked liar to allow a resurrection tale to spread if it were not true.

This is one of the most serious problems with the entire theory. Jesus Christ is either liar or Lord. If He were lying then, how could we accept **anything** He said? It must be either all or nothing. If He is to be our Savior, He must have lived a perfect life. That would include being a man of complete truthfulness. If He were a liar, then He cannot be our Lord and Savior.

(5) If He survived the crucifixion, then when and where did He die?

The skeptic cannot accept anything supernatural. But if he can't believe in a resurrection, he also can't believe in an ascension. Then when did Christ die? There is no historical record of **any other** death, funeral service, grave marker, or burial of Jesus. George Hanson in *The Resurrection and the Life* states, "It is hard to believe that this was the favorite explanation of eighteenth-century rationalism." The theory is now almost obsolete because of the ridiculous nature of its premise.

(6) The chief priests and Pharisees, fearing such a deception, would have surely confirmed His death. (Matt. 27:62–66)

The chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate to make sure "that deceiver" would not be able to "fake" a resurrection. They feared "the last error [would] be worse than the first." That fear caused Pilate to reply, "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." It was the zeal of the chief priests and Pharisees that shows the folly of rejecting the resurrection. These men **knew** Christ was dead. They feared everything but the possibility He might revive.

3. The hallucination explanation

a. The skeptics' argument

According to this "theory," all of the eyewitnesses of Christ's post-resurrection appearances were actually hallucinating.

b. The Scripture's answer

(1) Were more than 500 people all hallucinating? (1 Cor. 15:3–8)

(2) These appearances were seen by those who initially doubted the possibility of a resurrection. (Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:31–39; John 20:25–29)

These eyewitnesses would have quickly dismissed anything other than an actual appearance of Jesus Christ. The doubting of Thomas shows the folly of this theory. He would have made sure Christ was a reality. Thomas's touching Christ's hands and side dispel forever the idea of a hallucination.

(3) Christ's followers believed what was against their wills to believe.

Their belief did not arise from within but from without, based on the evidence. (Luke 24:13–31; John 20:15, 21)

4. The wrong tomb teaching

a. The skeptics' argument

According to this fable, the women, and subsequently everyone else, went to the wrong tomb.

b. The Scripture's answer

(1) The women carefully observed the burial. (Mark 15:47)

(2) The women on Easter morning were concerned not with the tomb's location but with the weight of the stone. (Mark 16:1–3)

(3) The empty graveclothes suggest the correct tomb.

No other grave would have contained such an arrangement of linen clothes unless someone else had experienced a miraculous resurrection.

(4) If the women were wrong, the chief priests and Pharisees would have surely corrected them, thereby squelching any possible mistake. (Matt. 27:62–66)

(5) Joseph of Arimathea could have easily corrected any mistake. (He owned the grave—Matt. 27:57–60.)

Lesson

22 The Exaltation of Jesus Christ

The exaltation of Jesus Christ is the act of God His Father by which the Father gave the Son the honor due Christ because of His deity. Because of God's exaltation of His Son, all believers will exalt Him forever.

> *"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him [Jesus Christ], and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* Phil. 2:9–11
>
> *"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."* Rev. 5:13

A. The exaltation of Jesus Christ began with His resurrection.

After Christ's resurrection, the understanding of the disciples was greatly increased. They were able to exalt Him as God in a way vastly superior to their veiled attempts before His crucifixion. Thomas could testify, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Christ stayed on earth for forty days after His resurrection to give full proof of His deity and to aid the apostles in their exaltation of Him as they preached the gospel.

For this reason the eyewitness accounts of the resurrection of Jesus Christ are significant. They gave power and substance to the messages of those early disciples. It is extremely difficult to deny the resurrection if over 500 people at different times and places were eyewitnesses of the post-resurrection appearances of Christ. The empty tomb stood readily available for inspecting by even the strongest of skeptics. The chronological order of His appearances is most likely this:

1. On the day of His resurrection He appeared to
    - **a.** Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:14)
    - **b.** The women returning from the tomb (Matt. 28:9–10)
    - **c.** Simon Peter (Luke 24:34)
    - **d.** The disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–33)
    - **e.** The apostles (Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–24)
2. Between the day of His resurrection and the day of His ascension He appeared to
    - **a.** Thomas (John 20:26–29)
    - **b.** Seven disciples by the Lake of Tiberias (John 21:1–23)

"Peace Be Unto You" **by Erwin Küsthardt**

". . .Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." *John 20:26*

   c. "Above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. 15:6)
   d. James (1 Cor. 15:7)
   e. The eleven apostles (Matt. 28:16–20; 1 Cor. 15:7)

3. At His ascension (Acts 1:3–12)

   The eleven apostles saw Him.

4. After His ascension He appeared to
   a. Stephen (Acts 7:55)
   b. Paul (Acts 9:3–6; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8)
   c. John on the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:10–19)

B. The exaltation of Jesus Christ continued with His ascension.

The ascension of Jesus Christ was the return of Jesus Christ to heaven forty days after His resurrection. (Acts 1:9–11)

1. The circumstances of the ascension
   a. It occurred forty days after His resurrection.

      "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days." Acts 1:3

   b. It occurred on the top of Mt. Olivet.

      "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey." Acts 1:12

Mt. Olivet or the Mount of Olives is approximately one mile east of Jerusalem and is about 2,700 feet above sea level. Its name came from the number of olive trees that were found on its slopes.

In the Old Testament it is mentioned very few times (2 Sam. 15:30; 2 Kings 11:7ff; 23:13; Zech. 14:4). Most of the New Testament references occur during the Passion week (beginning with His triumphal entry on Sunday and ending with His resurrection the following Sunday) and thereafter. It was located near Bethany, the hometown of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane, located on the western slopes of Mt. Olivet, that Jesus prayed on the night of His betrayal.

Its future significance is found in Zechariah 14:4.

> *"And his feet shall stand in that day [Christ's second coming] upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."* Zech. 14:4

c. It was prophetic of His second coming.

> *"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."* Acts 1:11

In God's Word **clouds** were always associated with the presence of Deity. In the Old Testament a cloud in the Temple indicated the presence of God.

> *"And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord."* 1 Kings 8:10–11

As clouds accompanied His ascension, so clouds will accompany His return to earth. These clouds are a reminder that Jesus Christ is God.

> *"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."* Rev. 1:7

2. The importance of the ascension

a. It provided the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit.

> *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."* John 16:7

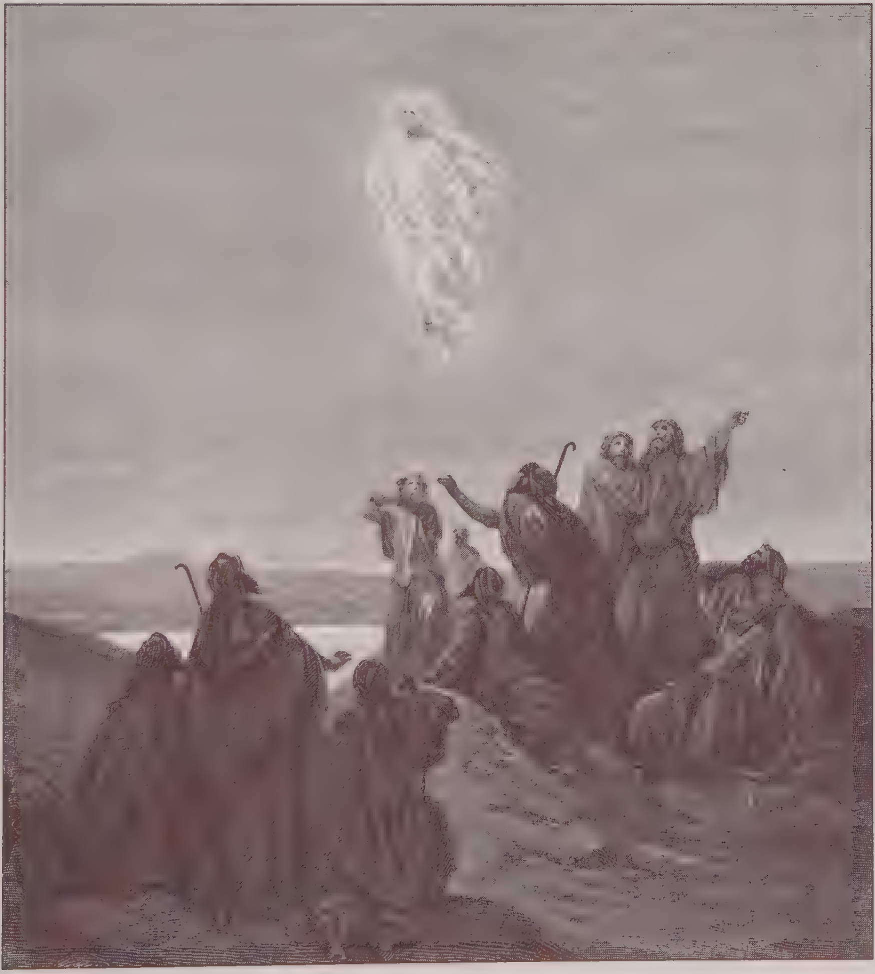
Jesus Christ said that it was best (expedient) for us that He go back to Heaven. His ascension would allow the Comforter (Holy Spirit) to come in a limitless way, guiding each Christian into all truth.

> *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."*
> John 16:13

b. It provided that unlimited power of Jesus Christ as our Intercessor.

While on earth Christ willingly limited His omnipotence, but now in Heaven His power is not limited. Each Christian now has the wonderful privilege of Jesus Christ as his **Intercessor.** As our Intercessor He pleads our case before a holy God on the basis of His shed blood on Calvary.

> *"He ever liveth to make intercession for them."* Heb. 7:25
>
> *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* 1 Tim. 2:5
>
> *"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."* 1 John 2:1



The Ascension by Gustave Doré

ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES

Some have attempted to find in the gospels contrary accounts of the eyewitnesses to the resurrection. The fact is that God did not have each of the writers of the gospels include exactly the same details as all the others. Each of the gospel writers was given a different point of view of Christ's life and ministry. As a result, each writer stressed certain events while disregarding other events.

Here is an illustration of this perfectly normal procedure.

> "A class in history was studying the French Revolution, and the pupils were asked to look the matter up, and report next day **by what vote** Louis XVI was condemned. Nearly half the class reported that the vote was **unanimous.** A considerable number protested that he was condemned by a **majority of one.** A few gave the **majority of 145** in a vote of 721. How utterly irreconcilable these reports seemed! Yet for each the authority of reputable historians could be given. In fact, **all were true,** and the full truth was a combination of all three.
>
> "On the first vote as to the king's **guilt** there was no contrary voice. Some tell only this. The vote on the **penalty** was given individually, with reasons, and a majority of 145 declared for the death penalty, at once or after peace was made with Austria, or after confirmation by the people. The votes for **immediate** death were only 361 as against 360. History abounds with similar illustrations." —*Bibliotheca Sacra* (Oct. 1907, pp. 768–9) and referred to in *The Resurrection of Jesus* by James Orr, pp. 90–91.

C. The exaltation of Jesus Christ will continue in the future.

1. Jesus will ultimately return in power.

   "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. 2:8

2. Jesus will reign on earth for one thousand years.

   "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. . . . But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Rev. 20:4–6

3. Jesus will be the object of glory and honor in Heaven for all eternity.

   "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:9–11

   "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:12

CHAPTER 4

Thirty Nine
Old Testament
Books
Law
History
Poetry
Major Prophets
Minor Prophets
Twenty Seven
New Testament
Books
Epistles and Letters

Pneumatology

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Lesson 23 The Third Person of the Trinity

The word **pneumatology** comes from two Greek words, ***pneuma,*** meaning “spirit,” and ***logos,*** meaning “doctrine.” Hence, pneumatology is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity. One of the most misunderstood doctrines of the Bible is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The student will do well to carefully study what the Bible reveals to us about the Holy Spirit, our Comforter.

A. The Holy Spirit is a Person.

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. That does not mean that He is inferior to the Father or the Son. It is simply an expression that is used because of the order in which the Trinity is most often found in the Bible (Matt. 28:19–20; 2 Cor. 13:14).

Some view the Holy Spirit as a force or as a power, not as a Person. This opinion has arisen partly because of the King James Version translators’ use of the word *it* in reference to the Spirit. The word *spirit* in the Greek language is in the neuter gender. Every noun in Greek has a gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter). But gender does not imply personality. In the Greek language, inanimate cities are often in the feminine gender. In the German language, one of the words for *girl* is in the neuter gender. In the English language, we often refer to ships and cities as feminine.

The translators of the King James Version occasionally referred to the Holy Spirit as *it* (Rom. 8:26) to remind us that a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in gender and number (singular or plural). Since the antecedent (*Spirit*) was neuter, the pronoun (*it*) must be neuter as well.

1. The personality of the Holy Spirit is **shown by His names.**

   a. *Comforter*

   This word (*paraclete* in the Greek) means one “called to your side,” as a lawyer.

> *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."* John 14:26
>
> *"But when the Comforter is come, . . . even the Spirit of truth, . . . he shall testify of me."* John 15:26

b. ***Guide***

> *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak."* John 16:13

c. ***Intercessor***

The Holy Spirit intercedes (pleads) for us during our prayer time.

> *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."* Rom. 8:26–27

THE INTERCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. We are too sinful to understand what we really need. (Rom. 8:26)
2. The Holy Spirit knows the will of the Father for our lives. (Rom. 8:27)
3. As we submit to the Lord's will, His will becomes our will. (Rom. 8:27)
4. The Holy Spirit prays with us for the requests we truly need. (Rom. 8:27)

Thus our prayers will be answered and everything in our lives will work together for God's ultimate good. (Rom. 8:28)

2. The personality of the Holy Spirit is **shown by His characteristics.**

a. He has a will.

> *"The selfsame Spirit, [is] dividing to every man severally as he will."* *1 Cor. 12:11*

b. He has a mind.

> *"And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit."* Rom. 8:27

c. He has great knowledge. (John 14:26; 15:26; 1 Cor. 2:10–13)

> *"The Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things."* John 14:26

d. He has speech ability. (Acts 1:16; 28:25; Rev. 2:7, 11)

> *"Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet."* Acts 28:25

e. He has sensibilities.

(1) He can be grieved by the Christian. (Eph. 4:30)

The word *grieve* in Ephesians 4:30 is the same word used of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane the night He was betrayed. It means "to make sad or sorrowful." Ephesians 4:31 reveals what grieves the Holy Spirit: "bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking." By allowing the "little" sins of bitterness and anger to take root, the believer grieves the heart of the Holy Spirit.

(2) He can be lied to by the Christian. (Acts 5:3)

(3) He can be quenched by the Christian. (1 Thess. 5:19)

(4) He can be resisted by the unsaved. (Acts 7:51)

(5) He can be blasphemed by the unsaved. (Matt. 12:31)

(6) He can be insulted by the unsaved. (Heb. 10:29)

3. The personality of the Holy Spirit is **shown by His abilities.**

a. He teaches.

"The Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things." John 14:26

b. He guides.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8:14

c. He commissions.

"So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." Acts 13:4

d. He intercedes.

"The Spirit itself maketh intercession." Rom. 8:26

e. He commands.

"Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near." Acts 8:29

f. He restrains.

"My spirit [Holy Spirit] shall not always strive with man." Gen. 6:3

g. He loves.

"for the love of the Spirit" Rom. 15:30

4. The personality of the Holy Spirit is **shown by the unusual grammar of the New Testament.**

Although the word for *Spirit* is in the neuter gender, there are times when a masculine pronoun is used to refer to Him. This seems to be the case whenever one of the Holy Spirit's duties is being revealed. This exception to grammatical rules indicates that the Bible views the Holy Spirit as a Person. In John 14:16, Jesus Christ used the masculine pronoun in referring to the Comforter.

B. The Holy Spirit is God.

1. The **divine names** for the Holy Spirit show that He is God.

a. The Spirit is called "God."

> *"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost. . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."* Acts 5:3–4

b. The Spirit is called "Lord."

> *"But we . . . are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* 2 Cor. 3:18

c. The Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son.

> *"baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"* Matt. 28:19

2. The **divine attributes** of the Holy Spirit show that He is God.

a. He is eternal.

> *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience."* Heb. 9:14

b. He is omniscient.

> *"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."* 1 Cor. 2:10

> *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, . . . shall teach you all things."* John 14:26

c. He is omnipotent.

> *"By his spirit [Holy Spirit] he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent."* Job 26:13

> *"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: . . . For with God nothing shall be impossible."* Luke 1:35–37

d. He is omnipresent.

> *"Whither shall I go from thy spirit [Holy Spirit]? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? . . . If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."* Ps. 139:7–10

e. He is holy.

It is often forgotten that His name contains one of His important attributes. He is God; therefore He is holy. It should be remembered always that the One Who is present with us at all times is holy.

f. He is truth.

> *"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."* 1 John 5:6

g. He is life.

> *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* Rom. 8:2

h. He is wisdom.

> *"Who hath directed the Spirit of the* Lord*, or being his counsellor hath taught him?"* Isa. 40:13

i. He is sovereign.

> *"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally [individually] as he will."* 1 Cor. 12:11

In the context, this passage is dealing with spiritual gifts. The point is that the Holy Spirit is sovereign. No one can demand a certain spiritual gift. Although each Christian does have a spiritual gift given to him by the Spirit, it is important to note that the Spirit determines what the gift will be.

THE MOST MISERABLE PERSON

Who is the most miserable person in the world? One might answer that the wicked, unsaved person surely must be because he is on his way to hell. But that is not true. The unsaved can enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25). However, the true Christian cannot. The moment he accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in his life. He can no longer enjoy a life of sin. Therefore, a Christian who is not right with God is the most miserable person in the world. His own carnal desires will not let him enjoy his Christianity, and the Holy Spirit will not let him enjoy his sin.

Lesson

24 The Holy Spirit's Past and Present Work

A. The Holy Spirit's work in the past

1. In creation

Each member of the Godhead was present and active in the creation of the world and mankind. This included the Holy Spirit.

> *"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."* Gen. 1:2
>
> *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."* Gen. 1:26
>
> *"Thou sendest forth thy spirit [Holy Spirit], they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth."* Ps. 104:30
>
> *"By his spirit [Holy Spirit] he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent."* Job 26:13
>
> *"The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."* Job 33:4

2. In the inspiration of the Scriptures

One of the Holy Spirit's most important works was the inspiration of the Bible through approximately 40 men of God over a period of 1,500 years. His very name, *Spirit* ("Breath"), reminds us of the definition of inspiration ("God-breathed").

> *"For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."* Mark 12:36 *quoting* Ps. 110:1
>
> *"Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. . . . For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and His bishoprick let another take."* Acts 1:16–20 *quoting* Ps. 69:25
>
> *"After that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross."* Acts 28:25–27 *quoting* Isa. 6:9–10
>
> *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* 2 Pet. 1:21

3. In the Lord's work

Throughout the centuries the Holy Spirit has been actively empowering Christians for special tasks. As these Christians yield their lives to the Lord, they experience the joy of knowing the Holy Spirit's power in their lives. The power of the Holy Spirit is not for the preaching ministry alone. All responsibilities in the Lord's work need the power of the Holy Spirit behind them if they are to glorify God and count for eternity.

a. Bezaleel was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

> *"See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God."*
>
> Exod. 31:2–3
>
> *"See, the* L*ORD hath called by name Bezaleel . . . And he hath filled him with the spirit of God . . . in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in the cutting of stones . . . And he hath put in his heart that he may teach."*
>
> Exod. 35:30–34

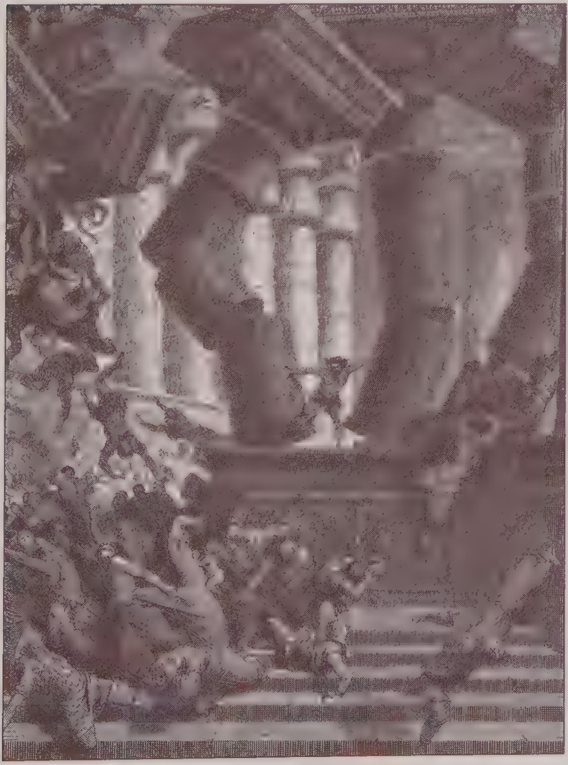
God called this man, Bezaleel, to work in manual labor and teach those skills to others. The preacher is not the only one who needs the power of God in his life. If God impresses upon a person a ministry of labor, or teaching, that person will need the power of the Holy Spirit as much as any other Christian.

b. Gideon was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

> *"But the Spirit of the* L*ORD came upon Gideon."* Judg. 6:34

Gideon felt totally inadequate for the job he was called by God to do (Judg. 6:13–15). With the Spirit's help, Gideon and his three hundred men were able to win a great victory over the Midianites. The Christian soldier in today's world needs the power of the Holy Spirit as much as anyone else.

c. Samson was empowered by the Holy Spirit.



Death of Samson by Gustave Doré

Although we usually think of Samson as a poor example of a Christian worker, several facts should be remembered:

(1) His name is included in the "Faith Chapter," Hebrews 11. (verse 32)

(2) He judged Israel for 20 years. (Judg. 16:31)

(3) His two major failures occurred toward the end of his 20-year judgeship.

(4) He was filled with the Spirit on at least four occasions. (Judg. 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14)

He is the only judge of which this is recorded.

d. **David** was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

> *"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward."* 1 Sam. 16:13

e. It is important to realize that Christians of **all ages** need the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Quench not the Spirit." 1 Thess. 5:19

The power of the Holy Spirit can be quenched by sin in the believer's life. Saul and David are both Old Testament examples of this truth.

> *"But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul."* 1 Sam. 16:14

> *"Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me."*
> *(David's prayer of confession in Ps. 51:11)*

David's sin with Bathsheba destroyed his testimony with others. He needed the Holy Spirit's power in order to again have a successful ministry.

> *"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."* Ps. 51:12–13

B. The Holy Spirit's work in the present

1. Foretold by Jesus

Jesus foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit:

> *"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"* John 7:37–39

When Jesus was glorified after His resurrection that evening in the upper room, He breathed upon the disciples, signifying the coming of the Holy Spirit to every Christian.

> *"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."* John 20:22

Since then every truly born-again Christian receives the Person of the Holy Spirit at his conversion.

2. In salvation

When an individual receives Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, he also receives the Holy Spirit to dwell in his body. The following Scriptures teach this important truth.

> *"For in him [Jesus Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."* Col. 2:9–10

There is no need for a subsequent reception of the Holy Spirit into our lives. He comes in at salvation. There is no need to pray for the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives, although we need to daily pray for His power and fullness in our lives.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Cor. 3:17

The unsaved person is in bondage to sin and death, but in salvation the Christian receives glorious freedom and liberty in the Holy Spirit—liberty to do what is right, not the license to do what is wrong.

Liberty does not mean absence of laws. The Constitution of the United States promises its citizens "liberty," but that does not give license to break its laws. We can never enjoy true freedom without some restrictions on our activities. If every man does that which is right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25), the result is eventual *anarchy*. As Christians, we are to maintain proper standards of conduct because of our Lord's admonition to **"be ye holy; for I am holy"** (1 Pet. 1:16).

God says that obedience to His commandments is a proof of our love for Him. The greatest commandment is to "love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). How does a Christian show his love for God? He does it by ***obeying God's commandments,*** not by minimizing or ignoring them.

> *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."* John 14:15

> *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."* John 15:10

> *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."* 1 John 5:2–3

The Christian who lives by the ethical principles of God's Word is often condemned by others as a "legalist."

> "Legalism is more often talked about than defined. It has become a "buzzword" which is designed to disarm and silence those who favor standards. No one wants to be called a legalist any more than they want to be called a communist or a racist. But having standards is not the same as being a legalist. Legalism involves an improper focus. It is a preoccupation with the letter as opposed to the spirit of the law (2 Cor. 3:6). . . . Many today equate fundamentalism with legalism. If you believe in personal standards of Christian conduct, you are labeled as a legalist."
>
> —*Ken R. Pulliam* in the *Tri-City Builder*

A hired housekeeper and a wife both clean house, do laundry, and prepare meals, but there is a tremendous difference in the *motives* of the two women. The wife does her work because she loves and cares for her family; the hired housekeeper does her work for wages. God desires us to serve Him out of love, not for wages, which is legalism.

The presence of Christian standards certainly does not imply legalism. Though the Christian is not under the law, that does not mean that he has no guidelines, for he is under the "law of Christ." The Bible clearly teaches that liberty is not license to break God's laws or principles.

> *"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"* Gal. 2:21–3:3

At Pentecost the disciples did not "pray down the Spirit." They were commanded by the Lord to "wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). The Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost was according to God's schedule. Pentecost was the fiftieth day after the offering of the barley sheaf (Feast of Firstfruits) during the Passover week. Just as Jesus Christ came in "the fulness of the time" at Bethlehem (Gal. 4:4), so the Holy Spirit also came in God's perfect timing at the Feast of Pentecost.

> *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."* 1 Cor. 12:13

The Greek verbs in 1 Corinthians 12:13 are in the aorist tense, signifying a once-for-all occurrence. It is significant that we are never commanded to "receive the Holy Spirit," but we are commanded in Ephesians 5:18 to "Be filled with the Spirit"; that is, we are to allow the Holy Spirit to have His full reign in our lives.

> *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."* Eph. 4:30

At salvation the Holy Spirit gives us a guarantee that someday "this corruptible" [body] will "put on incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:53). Our body is finally changed (Rom. 8:22–23).

> *"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"* 1 Cor. 3:16

> *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"* 1 Cor. 6:19

3. In sanctification

Sanctification is the act of setting apart something or someone from the world and unto God's service. It is a work that only the Holy Spirit of God can do. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, He purifies our lives and uses us for God's work.

The phrase ***filling of the Spirit*** is often used to describe this process of sanctification. We are **commanded** to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

> *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."* Eph. 5:18

The command of Ephesians 5:18 "be filled with the Spirit" is in the Greek present tense which denotes a continual process for the Christian. The more we yield to Him, the more He can use us. Without the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, our service for God will reap only wood, hay, and stubble (1 Cor. 3:11–17).

Lesson

25

The Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit

A. Introduction

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is a wonderful reality. He not only provides us with abilities to serve God more effectively but also helps us to mature as Christians by refining spiritual qualities in our lives. These spiritual advantages are revealed in two passages of Scripture. 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 outlines nine special gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to believers. Galatians 5:22–23 discusses nine graces which make up the fruit (evident result) of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives.

> *"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*
>
> *"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*
>
> *"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."* 1 Cor. 12:4–11
>
> *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."*
> Gal. 5:22–23

NINE GIFTS (1 COR. 12:4-11)	NINE GRACES (GAL. 5:22-23)
1. wisdom	1. love
2. knowledge	2. joy
3. faith	3. peace
4. healing	4. longsuffering
5. miracles	5. gentleness
6. prophecy (preaching)	6. goodness
7. discerning	7. faith
8. tongues (languages)	8. meekness
9. interpretation	9. temperance

There are important distinctions between the gifts and the graces (fruit of the Spirit).

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE GIFTS AND THE GRACES

	NINE GIFTS	NINE GRACES
1.	Each gift is distinct.	All nine graces make up the fruit of the Spirit.
2.	God determines which gift to give each believer.	God wants the believer to have all nine of these graces.
3.	The gift equips the believer for service.	The fruit consists of important character qualities.
4.	Gifts are represented in every church.	These graces are to be represented in every Christian.
5.	The ultimate purpose of gifts is power in soulwinning.	Their purpose is maturity of the Christian so that the world will see a difference in the believer.

B. The gifts of the Spirit 1 Cor. 12:4–11

Spiritual gifts are "extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit." *—J. H. Thayer*

1. Every believer has one spiritual gift.

> *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."* 1 Cor. 12:7
>
> *"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."* 1 Cor. 12:11

2. Each spiritual gift is given by the sovereign choice of the Holy Spirit.

No Christian has a right to ask for a particular gift.

> *"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."* 1 Cor. 12:11
>
> *"But now hath God set the members every one of the in the body, as it hath pleased him."* 1 Cor. 12:18

3. Each spiritual gift is important because of the Giver, not the receiver.

> *"And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord."* 1 Cor. 12:5
>
> *"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit."* 1 Cor. 12:11

For this reason, no one has a right to boast in his spiritual gift. The Christian is just the instrument; the power comes from God.

4. The great diversity of spiritual gifts brings unity to the body of Christ.

> *"But now are they many members, yet but one body."* 1 Cor. 12:20

It is clear from Scripture that we as Christians need each other. We cannot all be the "eye" in the body of Christ, nor can we all be the "foot." God uses the analogy of the human body to show the importance of every member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12–27).

5. No one should compare his spiritual gift with the spiritual gift of another.

> *"Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."* 1 Cor. 12:22–25

6. God's spiritual gift will never guide you contrary to God's Word.

Some might think that God's gift of wisdom, knowledge, or discernment might supersede what God has revealed in His Word. But the "same Lord" and "the selfsame Spirit" which gave us God's Word are the Ones who give the diversity of gifts.

We should never be guilty of accusing the Holy Spirit of "leading us" in a direction which is contrary to God's Word. The Holy Spirit will never lead a person to marry an unsaved person. God has already spoken on that subject (2 Cor. 6:14). We should never use "spirituality" as an excuse for disobedience (1 Sam. 15:1–35).

> *"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."* Matt. 15:8

THE GIFT OF LANGUAGES

One of the Holy Spirit's special gifts to certain Christians is the gift of languages. Men and women fluent in several languages have been used by God in the translation and transmission of His Word to a needy world. Three examples of men who had the gift of languages are William Tyndale, William Carey, and Robert Dick Wilson.

William Tyndale

If the history of the English Bible can be traced to one man, that man would be William Tyndale (1490–1536), one blessed by God with the gift of languages. Although John Wycliffe had translated the first English Bible from the Latin, Tyndale believed it was important to translate the Bible from the original languages. Therefore, he became very proficient in the languages of the Bible. His contemporary, Herman Buschius, once said of Tyndale, "he was so skilled in seven languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French, that whichever he spoke you would suppose it his native tongue." In his lifetime Tyndale almost singlehandedly translated the entire New Testament and half of the Old Testament, leaving notes for the translation of the remainder with his accomplices.

> "The English Bible as it has been handed down to us in the King James Version, dependent for the most part upon Tyndale's translation, is a unique phenomenon. The English language and literature grew into beauty and excellence by slow processes just as other languages and literature have done, except for the fact that in England Tyndale's translation of the Bible was the lens which caught and focused all the rays from many sources. This concentration upon one spot through the genius of one man's mind can be accounted for only by the fact that racial and linguistic elements were welded together by the living spirit, finding their final expression in Tyndale's personality."

> "He was the man of the hour. Yet creative genius does not know hours and minutes, it only knows opportunities. Here was the opportunity and Tyndale seized it. His translation is said to have had a greater influence on the English language and civilization than any other vernacular Bible has had on any other nation, for both civilization and language were then in just the stage to be formed by such a vigorous expression of Holy Writ." *—Laura H. Wild,*
> *The Romance of the English Bible*
> (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, & Co., 1929), pp. 56, 143–144.

William Carey

The Holy Spirit's gift of languages to William Carey (1761–1834), the father of modern missions, allowed him to translate the Bible and transmit the gospel to many who had never heard. As a young man Carey taught himself Greek, Latin, French, and Dutch so he could read for himself the great literature of these languages. His God-given linguistic ability was to be an invaluable aid to him as he began his missionary work in India.

Within just a few years of his arrival in India he became so proficient in the Indian languages that he became the Professor of Oriental Languages in the College of Fort Williams, Calcutta. He continued his study of the Indian dialects in order to win more people to Christ. To help the Indians reach their own people, he wrote grammar books in six different languages, as well as textbooks and dictionaries.

But his greatest goal was to translate the Bible into every language of India.

> "Shortly after the establishment of Dr. Carey and his brethren at Serampore, they devised and carried into execution a comprehensive scheme for the translation of the Scriptures into all the languages of India. Accordingly, they published, in the course of about five-and-twenty years, translations of portions of the Old and New Testament, more or less considerable, in forty different dialects." *—H. H. Wilson*

Robert Dick Wilson

Robert Dick Wilson (1856–1930) used God's gift of languages to challenge the critics of God's Word. By the time he was 25 years old, he could read the New Testament in nine different languages. Upon graduation from Princeton Seminary, Wilson studied in Germany to learn languages not taught anywhere in the United States. He soon could repeat from memory a Hebrew translation of the entire New Testament as well as large portions of the Hebrew Old Testament. After he had learned 45 ancient languages and dialects fluently, Robert Dick Wilson offered this challenge to the critics of the Old Testament:

> "I defy any man to make an attack upon the Old Testament on the ground of evidence that I cannot investigate. I can get at the facts if they are linguistic. If you know any language that I do not know, I will learn it."

Yet this linguistic genius never forgot the simplicity of God's wonderful message to all mankind.

> "One of the stirring moments in the experience of his students occurred when, after a dissertation on the complete trustworthiness of Scripture, the renowned scholar said with tears: 'Young men, there are many mysteries in this life I do not pretend to understand, many things hard to explain. But I can tell you this morning with the fullest assurance that
>
> 'Jesus loves me, this I know
> For the Bible tells me so.' "
>
> —*Henry W. Coray*

C. The graces of the Spirit Gal. 5:22–23

> *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."*
> Gal. 5:22–23

The *fruit* (singular) is made up of nine Christian *graces* (characteristics). They all need to be a part of the Christian's walk. Just like the notes of a musical scale, all must be present in order to have a harmonious Christian life. ***The key to the fruit of the Spirit is love.***

> *"Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."* Matt. 22:37

The great love chapter (1 Cor. 13) shows that with love as the root, all of the Christian graces can blossom into fruit in the Christian's life.

	ROOT (LOVE) I CORINTHIANS 13:4–13	FRUIT GALATIANS 5:22–23
1.	"The greatest of these is charity [love]." (v. 13)	Love
2.	"rejoiceth in the truth" (v. 6)	Joy
3.	"is not easily provoked" (v. 5)	Peace
4.	"suffereth long" (v. 4)	Longsuffering
5.	"is kind" (v. 4)	Gentleness
6.	"thinketh no evil" (v. 5)	Goodness
7.	"believeth all things" (v. 7)	Faith
8.	"seeketh not her own" (v. 5)	Meekness
9.	"doth not behave . . . unseemly" (v. 5)	Temperance

FAITH: A GIFT AND A GRACE

The word *faith* is the only characteristic found in both the listing of the nine spiritual gifts and the listing of the nine graces of the fruit of the Spirit. Evidently all Christians are to increase their faith, but there is also a special gift of faith given only to certain Christians.

Occasionally a young person will become frustrated by someone who is able to "trust God to supply his every need." Yet when he asks God for that same help nothing happens. Does that mean his faith is weak? Of course not. In fact, it may take more faith to keep trusting in God when there is no "evidence" of God's working. George Müller, a man who knew the power of prayer, determined never to ask man for anything, only to ask God. But he also admitted that his belief was not to be the pattern for others. God had given to George Müller a special gift, the gift of faith.

Lesson

26 The Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (or the **unpardonable sin,** as it is sometimes called) is a doctrine that is only vaguely understood by most Christians. It is probably more misunderstood than any other teaching on the Holy Spirit.

A. The Scriptural account of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is found in Matthew 12:22–32, Mark 3:22–30, and Luke 12:10.

> *"Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him. . . .*
>
> *"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.*
>
> *"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, . . . if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? . . . Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.*
>
> *"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."* Matt. 12:22–32

The following observations should be made:

1. Jesus Christ contrasted speaking against Himself with blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

   Questioning the deity of Christ could be expected, since He purposefully veiled His deity throughout most of His ministry.

2. Jesus never stated that the Pharisees had just committed the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

B. The Scriptural ingredients of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

It would seem that two facts were present in Matthew 12 and Mark 3 that perhaps cannot be duplicated today:

1. A work was done (before many observers) by Christ on earth that was unmistakably supernatural.
2. A work that was clearly the work of Deity was insultingly ascribed to Satan.

The doctrine of an "unpardonable sin" should not be viewed lightly. Is it possible for such a sin to be committed today? Several Bible scholars believe that it is not. Those who do believe that such a sin is possible equate it with the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior.

> "Sins against the Son of man may be forgiven because it was easily possible, by reason of His humble birth, lowly parentage, etc., to question

> the claims He put forth to deity. But when, after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came, and presented to every man's conscience evidence sufficient to prove the truth of these claims, *the man who then refused to yield to Christ's claims* was guilty of resisting, insulting, and that amounts to blaspheming the testimony of the whole Godhead, of which the Spirit is the executive." —William Evans

A person who ***fears*** he has committed the unpardonable sin is clearly indicating that he has not.

A hard-hearted person would not care about the things of the Lord. He would not be concerned with the things of salvation. A spiritually soft-hearted person, on the other hand, either is saved or is close to salvation. He should be shown the love of God which passeth knowledge.

> *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect [mature] in love."*
> 1 John 4:18

Even when it appears that God's longsuffering has exhausted itself, He is still patient.

> *"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."* Hos. 4:17

Yet later God says,

> *"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?"* Hos. 11:8

The sinner who repeatedly hears the gospel and knowingly and willingly rejects the Spirit's tugging at his conscience to accept Christ as Savior may in time reach the place that he not only rejects God's dealing in his life but also despises God's dealing to such an extent that he openly and defiantly speaks blasphemously against the Holy Spirit's dealing in his life.

C. The Scriptural contrast between the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and the "sin unto death"

Occasionally the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is confused with the sin unto death. The expression "sin unto death" is found in 1 John 5:16, "There is a sin unto death." This refers to a habitual life of sin that the ***Christian*** becomes involved in which ultimately leads to a premature death. The theme of Hebrews deals with this sin. At Kadesh-barnea the Jewish nation rejected God's offer of the Promised Land and committed the "sin unto death." As a result, all of the Israelites over 20 years of age (except Joshua and Caleb) eventually died in the wilderness. In the book of Hebrews we are warned not to follow in their footsteps since we have it so much better than they did.

> *"To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness. . . . Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."* Heb. 3:7–12

Throughout the book of Hebrews the Christian is warned not to harden his heart against God's leading or God will take him home early. In Hebrews chapter 12 God gives the progression of His dealings with His children.

1. **God exhorts His children to do right.**

   God uses parents, the Word of God, preachers, and Christian teachers to admonish His children to obey His commands.

   > *"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children."* Heb. 12:5

2. **God chastises His children if they reject His exhortations.**

   God's second step is sending tribulation into the lives of His children. It may be in the form of sickness, financial reverses, animosity among friends, discouragement, failure in a class, or hundreds of other ways.

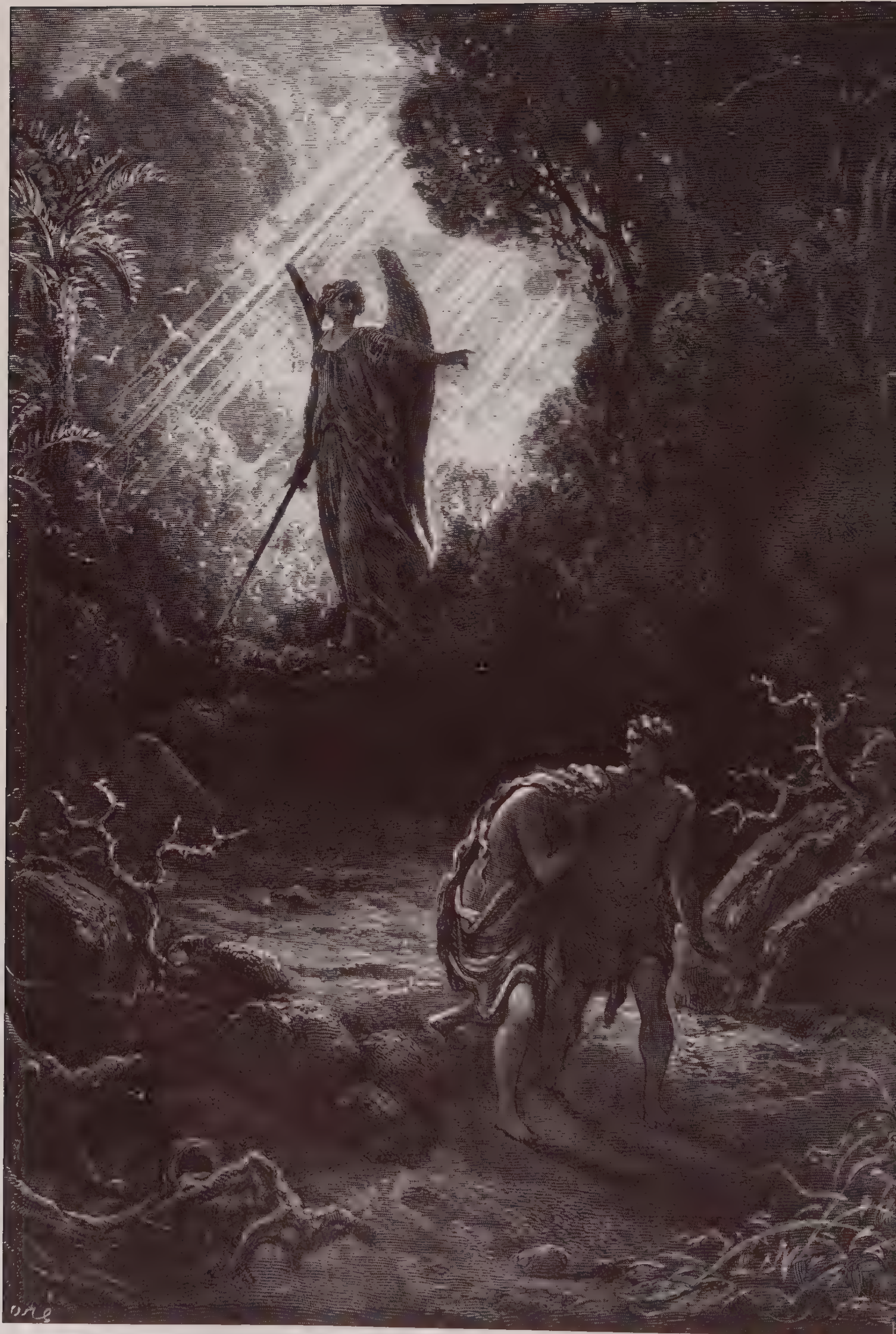
   > *"My son, despise [ignore] not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."* Heb. 12:5–6

3. **As a last resort, God will finally take His child home to heaven prematurely.**

   An event that would normally be accompanied by the blessings of God will instead be accompanied by the sorrow of God's judgment. The rewards that could be gained with additional life on earth will be forever lost. This is God's final step in working with His disobedient children who did not listen to the exhortation nor heed the chastisement of a holy God. They finally are guilty of sinning the "sin unto death."

   > *"Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"* Heb. 12:9

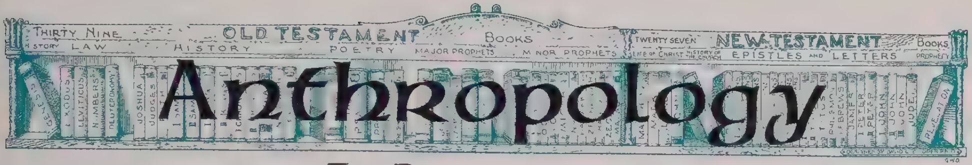
Suppose a father has a junior-age child who leaves for a week of summer camp that is approximately thirty miles away from home. The father warns him to be good as he boards the bus for a week away from home. But on the second night the father gets a phone call from his son's camp director indicating that his son has not been obeying. The father asks to speak to his son and "exhorts" him to "straighten up." But the next day he gets a second call with the same report. This time the father drives the thirty miles to the camp and administers some corrective measures. But the very next day the telephone call he receives reveals absolutely no change in the son's behavior. The son is called to the telephone in order to hear his father say, "All right, you've had your chance; I'm coming to get you and bring you home early."



***Adam and Eve Driven Out of Eden* by Gustave Doré**

"And he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of Life. . . ." *Gen. 3:24*

CHAPTER 5



Anthropology

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lesson 27 The Origin of Man

The word **anthropology** is derived from two Greek words: *anthropos,* meaning "man," and *logos,* meaning "word" or "doctrine." Hence, anthropology is the doctrine of man. The study of anthropology covers the subjects of the origin of man, his fall, and the results of his fall.

The Bible doctrine of anthropology is the study of man from a Scriptural perspective. True anthropology must begin and end with the Word of God. Biblical anthropology teaches two main facts: (1) Man was created by God in His image, and (2) man is a sinner by nature. These two facts are in direct opposition to the teachings of modern, non-Christian anthropologists. They usually base their studies of man and his culture on two un-Scriptural premises: (1) Man evolved from the animals, and (2) man is basically good.

Because of his false premises, the non-Christian anthropologist will discourage all attempted changes in a people's culture. By contrast, the missionary (one of the best true anthropologists) will discourage a particular custom that is condemned in God's Word. The anthropologist can never understand man until he first understands God and His revelation of true anthropology.

The creation of man

> *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* Gen. 2:7

1. **God created man.**

   Although Adam and Eve were the last of God's creation, in order of importance they were first. ***Adam*** (meaning "man") and ***Eve*** (meaning "mother of all") were the crowning glory of God's creation.

   The creation of man from the dust of the ground was a masterwork that only the omnipotent God could accomplish. No wonder the psalmist David could exclaim:

> *"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."* Ps. 139:14

Nothing can compare to the wonder of the human body that God created. Nothing that man has ever made can compare to the glory of God's masterpiece. No computer can compare to the human brain, no camera to the human eye. When man builds an artificial heart, he can do no better than use the human heart as his pattern.

2. **God created man in His own image.**

> *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."* Gen. 1:26–27

It is clear that this passage does not mean that man has a physical resemblance to God, for "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). It has to do with man's moral nature. Man is a "shadowed image" of his Maker. Like

WONDERS OF THE HUMAN BODY

The human body consists of thousands of individual parts, large, small, and microscopic; but all are so joined together that they function as a perfect, synchronized organism. The human body consists of billions and trillions of individual cells, and every cell is a distinct unit that functions in perfect harmony with every other cell.

The ability to walk and to move from place to place and to balance the tall upright body on a comparatively small pedestal is itself a most remarkable feature of the human body. If the foot were flat and rigid, fixed at right angles to the bone of the leg, walking would be difficult or impossible. The elastic arches also serve as shock absorbers to soften the jar resulting from walking on a hard surface. The human foot is a masterpiece of engineering. It is a miniature suspension bridge but more complicated than an ordinary bridge.

Like the foot, so also the hand consists of a bony framework: muscles, tendons, fats, and nerve fibers. There is a total of 27 individual bones in the hand; 8 of these are in the wrist, 5 in the palm, and 14 in the fingers. The hand is so constructed that it lends itself to an unlimited variety of functions. But every act of the hand sets in motion a whole series of operations of the human mechanism. For example, to close the fist or make a simple grasping motion involves an array of muscles, joints, and tendons, all the way from the shoulder to the fingertips. Doing such a simple thing as lifting a spoonful of soup to one's mouth involves more than 30 joints and 50 muscles, all of them functioning together in perfectly synchronized order. —Reprinted by permission from *The Wonders of Creation* by Alfred M. Rehwinkel, published and copyright 1974 Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN 55438.

God, man has intellect, emotion, and will. Man can think, use language, determine his direction, and make choices.

God views man's likeness to Him very seriously. He bases the institution of capital punishment upon that fact.

> *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."* Gen. 9:6

God has a high regard for the sanctity of human life. God does not look with favor upon those who insist upon their right to take the life of another human being. How ironic that the same people who legislate for a woman's right to kill her unborn child will also picket outside a prison on the night of an execution with placards reading, "Thou shalt not kill."

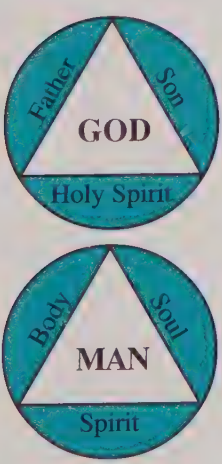
3. **God created man with a God-consciousness.**

The Scripture reveals that the man God created was a three-part being: **body, soul,** and **spirit.**

> *"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* 1 Thess. 5:23

Man is both a *material being* (body) and an *immaterial being* (soul and spirit). Only man has a spirit. It is that part of his being that differentiates him from all other living things. His spirit was made for fellowship with God. Only man has within himself a consciousness of God.

Body = Unconscious existence (A tree is alive but unconscious.)
Soul = Conscious existence (An animal, as well as man, is alive and conscious of the physical world.)
Spirit = God-conscious existence (Only man is conscious of the eternal or the spirit world.) Conscious, worship



As a three-part being (body, soul, and spirit), man is indeed made "in the image of God."

Man was made for fellowship with his Creator. There is a vacuum in the human life that can be filled only by God. Man has always tried to fill that vacuum with the pleasures and things of this world, but they cannot satisfy. A person can find peace and happiness only when that void is filled with the presence of the One Who made him in **His** image.

Man was created in the image of God.

4. God gave man much responsibility.

> *"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed."* Gen. 2:8

In the perfect environment of the Garden of Eden, Adam had much responsibility. He was to have a close working relationship with other living things. Man was to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26). God had commanded him to "subdue" the earth (Gen. 1:28).

He was to take care of the garden as well as name the animals.

> *"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."* Gen. 2:15
>
> *"And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them."* Gen. 2:19

5. God created man with a free will.

> *"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* Gen. 2:16–17

Because God had given to man so many blessings, man was accountable to God for his actions. It is a principle of God's Word that with opportunity comes responsibility (Luke 12:47–48). Because of the special relationship God had with man, He expected more from man than from the animals.

But why did God put a forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden? Was He "tempting" man to sin? We know that God does not tempt anyone (James 1:13). God placed one tree in the Garden to allow Adam and Eve the freedom of choice. God does not want to force His will upon anyone. God desires man to love Him by choice, not by force.

There were many trees from which Adam and Eve were allowed to eat. We often concentrate on the "negatives" (the things we cannot do in life), when we ought to thank God for *all* of His wonderful blessings (positive things) that come to us daily.

6. God created man with intelligence.

It has been suggested that Adam was the most intelligent man who ever lived. Sin had not yet taken its toll on the intelligence of Adam. He had a fully developed God-created language with which to name all the animals God brought to him (Gen. 2:19–20). Adam's longevity (930 years—Gen. 5:5) would allow him to increase in knowledge to a superior level. His leisure time would allow him to make great mental advances. The universal language of his time would allow him and his descendants to learn from each other more easily than in our multilingual society. (From the genealogical records of Genesis 5, we learn that Adam and Methuselah were contemporaries. They could have shared with each other the knowledge gleaned over hundreds of years.)

7. God created man with a helpmeet.

> *"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."* Gen. 2:18

The word "meet" means "fit." God gave Adam a helper "fit" for him, or suitable for him. Today we often speak of a wife as her husband's "helpmeet."

> "Observe . . . that Adam was first formed, then Eve (1 Tim. 2:13). . . . If man is the head, she is the crown; a crown to her husband, the crown of visible creation. The man was dust refined, but the woman was dust double-refined, one removed further from the earth. . . . [Observe] that the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam, not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be beloved." *—Matthew Henry*

8. God created man an immortal being.

Man was created to live forever. Every man has within him a never-dying soul that will spend an eternity somewhere. God's primary purpose in the creating of man was His own personal joy. God's desire is for this creation to exist forever.

> *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."* Rev. 4:11

God created man's spirit so that it will never cease to exist. The Scripture is full of references concerning the immortal, "eternal" nature of our immaterial being.

> *"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."* Eccles. 12:7
>
> *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."* Matt. 25:46
>
> *"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life."* Rom. 2:7
>
> *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."* 1 Cor. 15:53–54

* * *

Lesson

28 The Origin of Sin on Earth

Most cultures have an account of the origin of sin. If the Bible had not given God's account of the fall of man, the whole idea would have been left to conjecture.

It is in God's Word that we learn of sin's reality as well as find the only accurate account of exactly how sin entered the human race.

A. The events preceding the fall of man

1. God's command is given.

> *"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* Gen. 2:16–17

God reminded Adam of all the blessings he enjoyed as His creation. He then commanded him to accept one limitation to his freedom. The command should have been an easy one to obey in view of Adam's sinless condition and the bountiful blessings of God all around. He easily could have obeyed, but he did not.

2. God's goodness is questioned.

> *"And the serpent said . . . For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."* Gen. 3:4–5

Nothing much has changed over the centuries, for mankind still believes that God institutes laws to make people miserable. However, God's restrictions have always been designed for our welfare.

> *"And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day."* Deut. 6:24

> "After God had so bountifully offered proof of His goodness, our first parents behaved as though the Devil intended only good and God intended only ill." *—Franz Delitzsch*

3. God's Word is questioned.

> *"And he [the serpent] said . . . Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"* Gen. 3:1

> *"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."* Gen. 3:4

It is not until we read Revelation 20:2 that God reveals what we have suspected already:

> *"That old serpent . . . is the Devil, and Satan."* Rev. 20:2

The Devil has not changed his method of attack since the Garden of Eden. He tempts man to disobedience by getting him to question God's Word. The skeptic of today echoes Satan's mocking question, "Hath God said?"

It is possible that Eve also added to the Word of God ("neither shall ye touch it"—Gen. 2:17; 3:3). However, the Bible rarely gives us every detail of the conversations between man and God. God probably said much more to both Adam and Eve than is recorded in Genesis 2–3.

B. The events describing the fall

1. God's will is rejected.

> *"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."* Gen. 3:6

Eve gave in to the three sources of temptation described in 1 John 2:16:

EVE'S TEMPTATION

I JOHN 2:16	GEN. 3:6
Lust of the flesh	"good for food"
Lust of the eyes	"pleasant to the eyes"
Pride of life	"to be desired to make one wise"

2. God's warning is fulfilled.

a. God's warning was fulfilled in Adam and Eve.

As Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they immediately died spiritually (they were separated from God). Their soul did not die, nor did their body die. Only their spirit died. They hid themselves from the presence of God (Gen. 3:8) as God came to the Garden in the cool of the day.

> *"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"* Gen. 3:9
>
> *"Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"* Gen. 3:11

God in His omniscience did not need to ask either question. His questions were designed to bring Adam and Eve to face their sinful conditions. Their response is typical of mankind. Each in turn blames someone else for his sin (Gen. 3:12–13).

"The woman" (Adam blames Eve.)

"The serpent" (Eve blames the serpent.)

"The woman . . . thou gavest" (Adam blames God.)

A person will never be saved nor will a Christian really mature spiritually until he quits blaming God for his problems and begins accepting the responsibility for his own actions.

b. God's warning is fulfilled in all mankind by three types of death.

It is in the context of the Fall of man that we first learn about one of the great tragedies of life, and that is death. As a result of his sin, Adam's body began to die physically. His nerve cells began to wear out and die, never to be replaced. His once perfect body became the subject of disease and decay. His blood vessels eventually narrowed, diminishing the crucial flow of blood to all parts of his body. Before his fall he would have lived forever. But now he was a dying man.

But the Bible also teaches us in this context and others that there are three types of death. The word *death* simply means "separation"; therefore, each of the three types of death is marked by the separation of one entity from another.

(1) Physical death

Physical death is the separation of man's material being (his body) from his immaterial being (his soul and spirit). It is the most commonly used form of the word "death" in Scripture. The ***resurrection*** of Jesus Christ brought the victory over the physical death.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [Adam] came death, by man [Christ] came also the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. 15:20–21

All men will die physically. But, you say, what of Elijah, Enoch, and all those living at the time of the rapture? Since death means "separation" from the sinful body, then in a sense Enoch and Elijah did die and the rapture saints will "die."

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27

This verse, however, should not be pushed to the limit of requiring a physical death for everyone. This Scripture is a general statement of truth.

(2) Spiritual death

Spiritual death is the separation of the individual from God because of man's sin. Spiritual death entered the world when Adam sinned, and Adam began to die physically, but he immediately died spiritually. His sin separated him from God.

"And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God." Gen. 3:8

"Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." Gen. 3:23

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God." Isa. 59:2

The ***regeneration*** (salvation) of an individual marks the end of his spiritual death (separation from God).

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25

(3) Eternal (second) **death**

Eternal death is a **second** stage of spiritual death. If an individual refuses to accept God's offer of salvation, he will die eternally; that is, he will be separated from God **forever.**

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die [eternally] in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die [eternally] in your sins." John 8:24

"And death [the body] and hell [the soul and spirit] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:14–15

Adam brought death to the human race. But the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, brought life (1 Cor. 15:45–47).

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22

Both the saved and the lost will experience a resurrection (rejoining of his body with his soul and spirit), but the quality of that resurrection will be eternally diverse.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28–29

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Rev. 20:6

THREE DEATHS

Physical death	absolved by the resurrection of Christ
Spiritual death	absolved by the regeneration of Christ in the individual
Eternal (Second) **death**	*never* absolved

TWO RESURRECTIONS

First resurrection	for the Christian
Second resurrection	for the unsaved

C. The events following the fall

1. God's curses are instituted.

The Biblical use of the word *curse* implies God's withholding of His blessings. Individual and national blessings come to those who obey the Lord, and blessings are removed from those who disobey the Lord (Deut. 28). This removal of God's blessings is referred to as a curse in the Bible.

a. The serpent's curse

Before God's curse was placed upon the serpent he was a very beautiful creature. The Hebrew word for serpent means "a shining one." Since Satan is referred to as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14) he probably appeared as a shining one, a creature superior to Eve. But as the vehicle of the Tempter, the serpent was cursed by God and became a writhing reptile. Part of the curse upon him (eating dust) will not be lifted even during the Millennium, when all other creatures will enjoy an environment comparable to the Garden of Eden.

> *"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and the dust shall be the serpent's meat."* Isa. 65:25

But the curse went beyond the physical change in the serpent. The battle of the ages between God and Satan entered into the human realm.

> *"And I [God] will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Gen. 3:15

It is clear that it was God who determined to put enmity (a division) between Satan, Eve, and their respective "seed." The seed of the serpent is Satan. The "seed of the woman" is Jesus Christ, the virgin-born Savior whose heel was bruised at Calvary.

The battle lines of the ages have been drawn, Satan and his host on one side and Christ and His host on the other side. The Devil is a defeated foe. The initial battle was won at Calvary, and the final act will be completed when Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire forever and ever.

b. The woman's curse

The curse upon the woman involved increased pain in childbirth and submission to her husband (Gen. 3:16).

c. The man's curse

Although the woman was deceived, the man was not (1 Tim. 2:13–14). Because he "hearkened unto the voice of [his] wife" (Gen. 3:17), he would bear the brunt of the curse for all mankind.

> *"And unto Adam he [God] said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee,*

> *saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."* Gen. 3:17–19

> *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."* Rom. 5:12

Work was not a part of the curse. The ground was cursed to bring forth weeds and thistles, which meant that man would have to work by the sweat of his brow to get food from the ground. The curse included pain and sweat in that work, but work itself is not a curse. The good sense of accomplishment that accompanies a job well done is rewarding to man.

d. The ground's curse

Adam's sin affected the ground as well (Gen. 3:17–19). The entire universe was adversely affected by the sin of one man. Only through Christ's death could the world someday be purged of all traces of sin. Christ's death on the cross involved taking each part of the curse upon Himself.

CURSE OF SIN	CHRIST TAKING THAT CURSE
Ground Cursed	Gal. 3:13
Sorrow	Isa. 53:3
Thorns	Matt. 27:29
Sweat	Luke 22:44
Death	John 15:13; 19:30

2. God's plan of salvation is introduced.

But in the midst of all this tragedy there is a subtle reference to triumph. The first mention of God's wonderful plan of salvation is found in Genesis 3:15. Even before God places His curses upon mankind, He promises that a Savior will come into this world to redeem us from the curse of the fall.

> *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Gen. 3:15

> "The Bible is not a history of the world or even of man, but a history of the redemption of man from the sin into which he fell in the garden of Eden. This explains why the whole story of creation is summed up in one chapter of the Bible, and why so little is said about the history of the nations of the earth except Israel." *—James M. Gray*

D. The Scriptural significance of the fall

1. Original sin: definitions

a. Original sin is the first human sin.

b. It is the sin of the human race.

c. It is the sin in which each man and woman is conceived. (Ps. 51:5)

d. It is the sin nature of man.

Man sins because he is a sinner by nature; and because of his nature, he will continue to sin throughout his life.

2. Original sin: explanations

a. Man actually did sin in Adam.

> *"Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."* Rom. 5:12

b. Each of us would have done exactly as Adam did.

God placed Adam in a perfect environment and gave him every opportunity to succeed against temptation. But one of the lessons of the first three chapters of Genesis is that the environment does not change the man. Adam sinned in spite of his environment. Judas sinned although he walked for three years with the Son of God. During the Millennium (an environment of peace) people will still rebel. Given the same set of circumstances, each of us would have rebelled against God. The environment does not change the man.

c. Adam was chosen by God to give mankind the best opportunity possible to overcome temptation.

Adam was our best chance to reject sin. Given the opportunity we would have sinned much earlier than Adam did.

d. Since in Adam we are all represented, so likewise all men can be represented by the second Adam, the Son of man.

> *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."* Rom. 5:19
>
> *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* 1 Cor. 15:22

THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

If a person deserves Hell on the basis of original sin, can a stillborn infant go to heaven? Does God treat individuals differently if they are not mentally capable of deciding for or against Christ? The Bible seems to indicate that He does. Although original sin is present in a life at conception, the Lord seems to make a distinction between those who **are** old enough to understand and those who **are not.** The doctrine of the age of accountability is based on the following thoughts:

1. A young baby goes to Heaven, not because he does not have original sin, but because there is provision in the death of Christ to cover his original sin (2 Sam. 12:23).
2. The goodness in the nature of God seems to indicate He would make a distinction.

   "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. 18:25
3. God does make a Scriptural distinction between individuals of different mental capabilities. David's infant, born because of adultery, died and David made this statement: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23). We know David went to be with the Lord; therefore, the baby also went to Heaven.

   "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?" Jon. 4:11

   "Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it." Deut. 1:39
4. We cannot set a specific age when a child becomes accountable for his own sin; evidently the age would vary according to the spiritual teaching the child is exposed to, as well as the maturity of the individual child.

* * *

1. You reap what you [illegible]
2. You always reap later [illegible]
3. You reap more than [illegible]

Lesson

29 The Seriousness of Sin

We live in a day in which man minimizes the seriousness of sin. Man calls it "error"; God calls it sin. Man calls it "sickness"; God calls it sin. We need to learn to see sin from God's perspective. If our sin was serious enough to require the death of Christ on the cross, we as Christians should never treat sin lightly.

> *"But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."* Rom. 7:13

A. Sin is serious in God's sight.

1. Sin is a transgression of the law.

To transgress means to go beyond, to overstep the boundaries, or to exceed the limits imposed upon us by God. We must always remember that God's laws are given to us for our own good. Surely the One who made us knows what will bring us consistent joy and happiness.

> *"And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day."* Deut. 6:24

But in spite of this truth, man often determines that God's way is not best. Man has determined to transgress (violate) God's moral law.

> *"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."* 1 John 3:4

God also reveals in His Word that, by means of one sin, man is guilty of transgressing the entire law of God.

> *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."* James 2:10–11

If a person breaks one of God's laws, he is guilty of breaking the entire law of God. To illustrate this truth: A boy with a pellet gun takes his new "toy" and accidentally shoots a hole through his neighbor's picture window. The safety glass does not permit the complete destruction of the window, but there is obviously a hole in this large piece of glass. The boy feels he needs to make restitution. As he views the window with his neighbor standing by, he concludes that a new piece of glass the size of the pellet hole could not be worth more than a few dollars. He offers that amount to his neighbor to cover the expense of his error, but the whole glass must be replaced, not just the pellet hole. Thus this young man is "guilty of all" of the window although he has offended in only one point (pellet). Likewise, our sin has also made **us** responsible for the whole law.

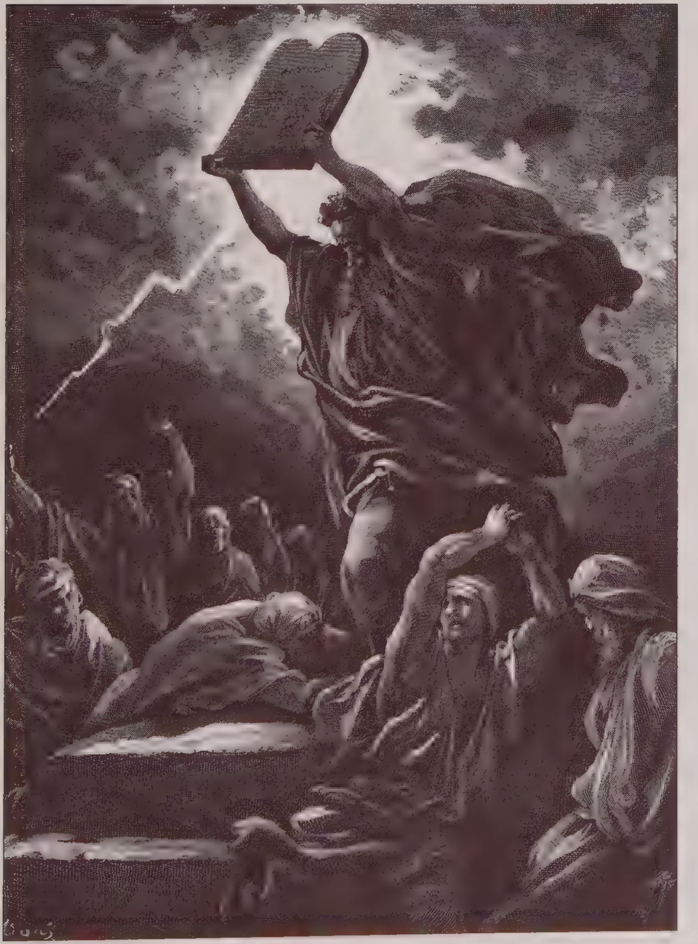
> *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* James 2:10

2. Sin is coming short of God's standard.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23

A group of men need to cross a great gulf that is 30 feet across and more than 500 feet deep. The only way they will be able to cross the chasm is by jumping from one side to the other. Some of these men are able to jump as far as 15 feet, but they come short and fall to their deaths. Others can jump as far as 20 feet, but they also fall short of the standard necessary for life. Suppose one man jumped 28 feet. Even this jump would be insufficient for him to bridge the chasm. All would fall short. The man who jumped 28 feet would have no reason to brag to the men who jumped only 15 feet. Their destiny was the same.

God's standard is perfection. It does not matter if a person claims to be "better" than another person. All of us have missed God's standard. The only way we can keep from falling short is to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for our eternal destiny.



***Moses Breaking the Tables of the Law* by Gustave Doré**

"And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount."

Exod. 32:19

3. All sin is wicked in God's sight.

It is the tendency of human nature to "categorize" sin. Surely lying is not as wicked as murder, we think. But from God's perspective **all** sin is bad. Even the "smallest" of sins will keep a person from Heaven. And even the "smallest" of sins had to be placed upon Jesus Christ at Calvary. We need to get God's perspective of sin and eliminate man's perspective. God treats all sin very seriously.

- **a.** God killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying. (Acts 5:1–10)
- **b.** God killed Uzzah for disobedience to His law concerning the touching of the Ark of the Covenant. (2 Sam. 6:1–11, cf. Num. 4:15)
- **c.** God killed 70,000 men because of David's sin in numbering the people. (1 Chron. 21:1–14)
- **d.** God removed Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden because of their sin of eating the forbidden fruit. (Gen. 3:23–24)

4. All sin has a terrible price.

> *"For the wages of sin is death."* Rom. 6:23
>
> *"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* Rev. 20:14–15

Sin has resulted in each individual's being separated from God. The end result of sin is separation from God eternally. That is called the **second death.** The only way to avoid the second death is by experiencing a **second birth.**

> *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* John 3:3

B. The Christian's sin is serious in God's sight.

1. The Christian does sin.

Although salvation is wonderful, it does not exclude the Christian from the presence of sin in his life. God's salvation from sin is in three tenses:

THE TENSES OF SIN

Past	The Christian was saved from the **Penalty** of sin.
Present	The Christian is saved from the **Power** of sin.
Future	The Christian will be saved from the **Presence** of sin.

At Calvary Jesus Christ saved us from the **penalty** of sin.

> *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."* Rom. 8:1

But we will not be free from the presence of sin until we get to Heaven.

> *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."* 1 John 1:8–10

Can the Christian Attain Sinless Perfection?

On the surface, 1 John 5:18 might seem to teach that the Christian will not sin:

> *"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not."* 1 John 5:18

When a person is saved, he receives a new, divine nature; he is partaker of the divine nature that cannot sin (2 Pet. 1:4). The part of us that is the new nature which we receive at the new birth cannot sin because it is from God. However, his old sinful nature remains with him until he dies, and he is very much prone to sin. So there will be no sinless perfection until we get to Heaven.

2. **The Christian's sin is forgiven.**

How can the sins we have not yet committed be already forgiven? The answer to that question is in the form of another question: How many of your sins were in the future when Christ died on the cross? All of our sins were placed upon Christ at Calvary—past, present, and future sins.

> *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."* 1 Pet. 2:24
>
> *"And he [Jesus Christ] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* 1 John 2:2

Then why should the Christian confess his sin, if it is already forgiven? The worst part of our sin is the broken fellowship with God which we experience.

> *"If we say that we have fellowship with him [God], and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."* 1 John 1:6

Confession of our sin to God is really agreeing with God about our sin; it is acknowledging our sin to God. The Christian must confess his sin in order to renew his broken fellowship with God.

The Bible is full of beautiful passages that vividly describe what happens when sin is confessed.

> *"He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."* Ps. 103:10–12
>
> *"For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."* Isa. 38:17
>
> *"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."* Isa. 43:25

Note: What a blessing to know that God forgives me for His own benefit as well as for mine!

"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Mic. 7:19

"Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. 8:12

3. **The Christian's sin has serious effects.**

   a. It results in **loss of fellowship** with God.

   > *"If we say that we have fellowship with him [God], and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."* 1 John 1:6

   b. It results in the **loss of joy.**

   David's sin resulted in a terrible loss of the joy which normally accompanies salvation. In David's great confession in Psalm 51, he cries out for the lost joy.

   > *"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."* Ps. 51:12

   c. It results in the **loss of full appreciation of God's love.**

   > *"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."* 1 John 2:5

   d. It results in the **loss of peace and happiness.**

   > *"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."* Rom. 4:6–7

   e. It results in **loss of power in prayer.**

   > *"that your prayers be not hindered"* 1 Pet. 3:7
   >
   > *"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."* 1 John 3:22

   f. It results in **frustration.**

   > *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* Rom. 7:18–24

   g. It results in **God's chastisement.**

   As Christians, we will never be **punished** in Hell for our sin, for all the punishment of our sin was placed upon Jesus at Calvary. If we have accepted His payment for our sins, we will never have to pay for it ourselves. God will not punish two individuals for the same sin. However, the Christian can be **chastised** for his sin. (Read Heb. 12:5–11.)

◆

Punishment is God in wrath (righteous indignation) giving the sinner what he deserves.

Chastisement is God in love directing the Christian back to the center of God's will for his life.

CHAPTER 6

THIRTY NINE
OLD TESTAMENT
BOOKS
LAW
HISTORY
POETRY
MAJOR PROPHETS
MINOR PROPHETS
TWENTY SEVEN
NEW TESTAMENT
BOOKS
EPISTLES AND LETTERS
PROPHECY

Soteriology

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Lesson

30 The Necessity of Salvation

The word ***Soteriology*** means the doctrine of salvation. Whereas Christology covers the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ, Soteriology covers what Christ's death and resurrection accomplished for fallen mankind. Topics such as faith, repentance, justification, regeneration, and adoption are covered under the doctrine of salvation.

A. Adam's sin made salvation necessary.

1. Adam's sin **brought death to the human race.**

God said that if Adam ate of the forbidden fruit he would die, but did he? The answer is Yes! Adam died spiritually (he was separated from God) the instant he took of the fruit. He also *began* to die physically. As a result of sin, mankind is spiritually dead and will eventually be physically dead. But Christ's death on the cross provided the solution to both physical and spiritual death. Regeneration abolishes spiritual death, while the Resurrection abolishes physical death.

2. Adam's sin **affected the entire universe.**

Adam's sin corrupted the entire universe. As a result, the Lord will eventually destroy the heavens (atmosphere and universe) and earth in order to purge them from sin; He will then create a new Heaven and a new earth for all eternity.

> *"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world [system] . . ."*
> 2 Pet. 2:20

> *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."* Rev. 21:1

3. Adam's sin **necessitated redemption.**

Scarcely had Adam sinned than God revealed His plan of redemption:

> *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Gen. 3:15

God promised that He would send a Redeemer who would die (Satan would bruise His heel on Calvary) but would conquer sin and death (by crushing Satan's head).

SALVATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

How were Old Testament saints saved? They were saved the same way anyone is saved—by faith. **By faith** they trusted that God would someday send a Redeemer.

> *"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."* Rom. 4:3
>
> *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my [Jesus'] day: and he saw it, and was glad."* John 8:56
>
> *"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."* 1 Pet. 1:10–11
>
> *"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham."* Gal. 3:8
>
> *"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [the children of Israel]."* Heb. 4:2
>
> *"We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth."* John 1:45
>
> *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."* Titus 2:11

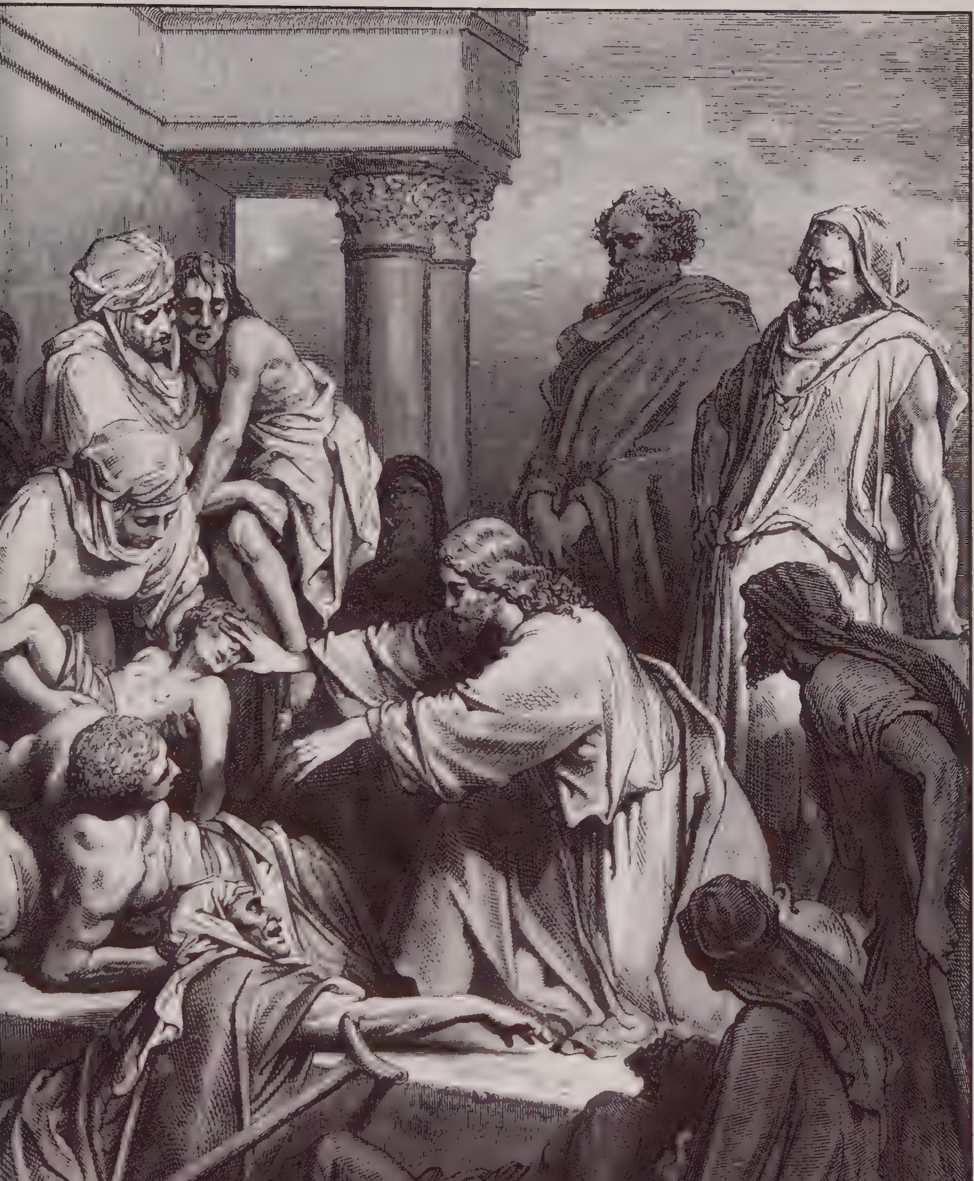
God gave the Old Testament saint salvation "on credit." Today one can buy a brand new car on credit. Although he promises to pay in the future he enjoys all of that car's features today. That car is his. He parks it in his garage; he enjoys driving it anywhere he wants to go. So God allowed the Old Testament saint to enjoy salvation before Calvary. God promised He would pay for salvation through Christ and the Old Testament saint enjoyed that promise by faith.

B. God provided a plan of salvation.

The plan of God was to provide a Redeemer for mankind. God Himself was that Redeemer. By simple faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son, an individual is able to become a child of God (John 1:12). That message has been taken around the world and has transformed the lives of millions of people. The gospel tract has been especially used to present briefly and clearly God's plan of salvation. One such tract has been Ford Porter's "God's Simple Plan of Salvation."

C. The word for Biblical salvation is full of meaning.

The word *salvation* has a rich range of meaning. In its simplest form it means "health." It is occasionally used to mean "rescue from danger" as in *saved* from drowning or *saved* physically from a dangerous fire. Its use in the Bible is quite divergent. As used in our spiritual relationship to God, its scope is past, present, and future.



***Jesus Healing the Sick* by Gustave Doré**

"And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them. . . ." *Matt. 15:30*

GOD'S SIMPLE PLAN OF SALVATION (EXCERPTS)

First, my friend, you must realize you are a sinner.

> *"There is none righteous, no, not one." "For there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* Rom. 3:10, 22, 23

There is no chance to be saved unless you come to realize you are a sinner. Because you are a sinner, you are condemned to die.

> *"For the wages of sin is death."* Rom. 6:23
> *"Sin, . . . bringeth forth death."* James 1:15

This means separation from God, in hell, forever. How terrible. Yes, my friend, but it is true. But God loved you so much that he gave his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, as your substitute, Who bore your sin, and died in your place.

> *"He hath made him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* 2 Cor. 5:21

> *"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."* 1 Pet. 2:24

Jesus had to die. He had to shed His blood.

> *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood."* Lev. 17:11

> *"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."* Heb. 9:22

Now we cannot understand how our sin was laid upon Jesus, but God says in His Word that it was. So your sin, my friend, was laid upon Jesus and He died in your place. It is true. God cannot lie.

The Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas: "What must I do to be saved?"

> *"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."* Acts 16:31

Simply believe on Him as the one who bore your sin, died in your place, was buried and was raised for your justification. Now call upon Him.

> *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved."* Rom.10:13

—Robert Ford Porter, 1956

1. In the **past** we are saved from the penalty of sin.

   Christ took all of our sins upon Himself when He died on Calvary. As a result, Christians stand today without condemnation.

   > *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."* Rom. 8:1

   > *"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."* 2 Tim. 1:10

2. In the **present** we are being saved from the power of sin.

   The Bible also uses the word *salvation* to describe a process which begins the moment we receive Christ as Savior and ends when Christ returns or we meet Him in death. As Christians we must continuously yield our lives to Christ so that sin will not reign in our mortal bodies. This important concept will help us understand verses that occasionally seem confusing.

> *"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."* Phil. 1:19
>
> *"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* Phil. 2:12
>
> *"By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you."* 1 Cor. 15:2
>
> *"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* 2 Tim. 3:15
>
> *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* Phil. 1:6

3. In the **future** we will be saved from the presence of sin.

Someday in the future the Christian will experience final, complete salvation. This final step is necessary because our flesh did not get "saved" when we accepted Christ as Savior. We gained a new nature but did not lose our old nature. However, someday our flesh will be "saved," and we shall lose our old natures forever.

> *"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."* Rom. 8:22–23
>
> *"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."* Rom. 13:11
>
> *"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."* Heb. 9:28

D. The folly of putting off salvation is great.

1. The sinner **mocks the earnest Scriptural appeals to be saved now.**

> *"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."* Isa. 55:6
>
> *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* 2 Cor. 6:2
>
> *"To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."* Heb. 4:7

2. The sinner **misses out on the life he could have had.**

> *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* John 10:10

3. The sinner **encourages God's judgment.**

> *"I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, . . . prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."* Amos 4:11–12

4. The sinner **treasures up God's wrath.**

   "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Rom. 2:5

5. The sinner **increases the gulf between God and himself.**

   "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." John 3:20

6. The sinner **has no assurance of tomorrow.**

   "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." James 4:14

7. The sinner **has no guarantee of another opportunity.**

   "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Luke 12:20

   "Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Acts 24:25

8. The sinner **builds up resistance against other possible salvation opportunities.**

   "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. 29:1

9. The sinner **increases his potential punishment.**

   The Bible clearly teaches that there will be degrees of punishment in the Lake of Fire. The indication seems to be that the more opportunities a person has to be saved the more he will be held responsible for his continued rejection of Christ's offer of salvation.

   "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Luke 12:48

   "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." Matt. 10:15

   "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." Matt. 11:21–22

   "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works." Rev. 18:6

   "Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." Matt. 23:14

   These verses reveal a very somber thought. The degree of punishment is often related to the *opportunities* one has to be saved. Wouldn't it be tragic if some of those who will suffer the most in the Lake of Fire were those who went to a good church or a good Christian school but constantly rejected the many opportunities of salvation? A person would be a fool to put off salvation.

Lesson

31 Faith for Salvation

Definition of faith

Faith is basically a trust or confidence in someone or something. Scripturally, faith is a childlike trust in God which accepts the record God has given to us of His Son.

> *"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."* 1 John 5:10–11
>
> *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* Heb. 11:1

A. Faith has a **sound basis.**

> *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Rom. 10:17
>
> *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* Heb. 11:1

The faith of the Christian is not a foolish nor a blind faith. Our faith is based on **substance,** on the **evidence,** on the eternal Word of God. The Christian trusts his eternal destiny to One he has never seen. That is faith.

B. Faith is **determined by its object.**

Often a new Christian is concerned that perhaps his faith was not strong enough to obtain genuine salvation. He may doubt his salvation because of an improper understanding of saving faith. It is *not* the **quality** of the believer's faith that is important; it is the quality of the **object** of his faith. Faith in a dead leader is weak faith. Faith in an idol's power is weak faith. The Lord says that faith as a grain of mustard seed can move mountains. Our faith is great because the object of our faith is great, the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. Faith **results in works.**

Although faith does *not include* works, it should *result* in good works. A person who is genuinely saved should live differently than he did before salvation. This is the stress of James 2:21–26. On the surface, this passage seems to conflict with Romans 4:1–4. Paul says Abraham was justified by faith, while James says Abraham was justified by works. In reality, there is no contradiction. Paul and James are discussing two different aspects of faith. Paul is viewing faith from God's perspective; James is viewing faith from man's perspective. James uses phrases such as "seest **thou**" (James 2:22) and "**ye** see" (James 2:24) to indicate that true faith will be seen by others only when it results in good works.

A Christian is sitting in a restaurant preparing to eat his evening meal. Before eating, he bows his head and thanks the Lord for his meal. Does the Lord conclude that this man is a Christian because of his action? Of course not. The Lord knows this man's heart and that as a child this man accepted **by faith** God's offer of salvation.

But what about the other people in the restaurant who see this man pray? They cannot see his heart. They do not know that as a child this man accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. They can see only the outward expression of his inward faith. As they see him pray, they might conclude that his "works" signify his Christianity. Faith before God should result in works before men.

D. Faith for salvation must be **exclusive of works.**

> *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."* Rom. 3:28
>
> *"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."* Rom. 4:2–3
>
> *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Eph. 2:8–9

Works cannot be a part of salvation or else they would nullify grace. Every religion and false cult in the world teaches that man must *do* something in order to inherit eternal life. The Hindu will lie on a bed of nails hoping it will aid his chances of Heaven. In Mexico City, a sincere individual will crawl three miles on his knees, pushing a vase of inexpensive flowers before him, hoping to better his chances of eternal bliss. Before Martin Luther was saved, he believed that crawling up a set of steps in Rome would earn him Heaven. But the Bible teaches that salvation is by grace (a free gift); and this gift (grace) is obtainable only by faith.

Other groups may try to add works to salvation *after* faith. The church at Galatia had this problem. After Paul left, some began teaching that faith was only the first step in the salvation process. Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians to correct this error.

> *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."* Gal. 1:6
>
> *"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."* Gal. 2:21
>
> *"O foolish Galatians, . . . Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"* Gal. 3:1–3

The problem of the church at Galatia is commonly called ***legalism.*** Legalism is adding anything (baptism, church membership, communion, church attendance) to faith as a means of obtaining grace.

Legalism "frustrates," or nullifies, faith. Neither "works-salvation" nor "faith-plus-works salvation" is Scriptural. Salvation is by grace and grace alone.

MY FAITH HAS FOUND A RESTING PLACE

My faith has found a resting place
Not in device nor creed:
I trust the Ever-living One
His wounds for me shall plead.

I need no other argument,
I need no other plea;
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.

Enough for me that Jesus saves
This ends my fear and doubt;
A sinful soul I come to Him
He'll never cast me out.

My heart is leaning on the Word
The written Word of God:
Salvation by my Savior's name
Salvation thru His blood.

—*Lidie H. Edmunds*, 19th century

E. Faith and repentance

1. Definition of repentance

Repentance: to feel such contrition or dissatisfaction over some past action or intention as to change one's ways; to be penitent; to change one's mind for better, to heartily amend with abhorrence one's past actions. Biblically, repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of direction because of regret over some past action or intention. To repent from disobedience is to become obedient. To repent from lying is to become truthful. In salvation, to repent from unbelief is to believe the gospel (John 3:18, Acts 20:21).

2. How the mind changes or repents

a. **Intellectually,** repentance is a change of view toward sin.

> *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent."* Acts 2:37–38

b. **Emotionally,** repentance is a genuine sorrow for sin and a desire for pardon.

> *"Have mercy upon me, O God. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. . . . The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."* Ps. 51:1–17

> *"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance. . . . For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of."* 2 Cor. 7:9–10

c. Volitionally, repentance is a change of will.

> *"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."* Luke 15:21
>
> *"Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them [his sins] shall have mercy."* Prov. 28:13
>
> *"Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."* 1 Thess. 1:9

3. What repentance is not

a. Repentance is not synonymous with knowing that you are a sinner.

The Scripture is full of examples of men who said, "I have sinned" but did not genuinely repent of their sins: Balaam (Num. 22:34); Pharaoh (Exod. 10:16); Saul (1 Sam. 15:30); and Judas (Matt. 27:4).

b. Repentance is not simply confession.

An individual may often feel sorry for something he has done without repenting. Perhaps he is sorry he was caught. Given the chance, he will do the same thing again. Some find it soothes their conscience if they confess to another human being on a weekly basis. This is not repentance. They find it easy to return to the same sin week after week.

c. Repentance and salvation are not the same.

"Repent ye, and believe the gospel," *Mark 1:15* shows that *believe* and *repent* are not one and the same.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out," *Acts 3:19* shows that *repent* and *conversion* are not the same. Repentance and faith are not two sides of the same coin.

"That they should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance," *Acts 26:20* shows that *repent* and *turn to God* are not the same.

Judas's repentance did not lead him to salvation. "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders." *Matt. 27:3*

d. Repentance does not apply only to salvation. Repentance is used several ways in Scripture.

(1) Regarding human relationships:

> *"If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he* ***repent,*** *forgive him."* Luke 17:3

(2) Regarding believers:

> *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and* ***repent.****"* Rev. 3:19

> *". . . and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not* ***repented*** *of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed."* 2 Cor. 12:21

(3) Regarding evangelists:

John the Baptist, Jesus, and the early disciples preached **repentance** to prepare people to believe in the Christ. It brought the people to the realization that they had sinned against a holy God and needed God's forgiveness. Preaching on repentance helps break down the pride, the arrogancy, the willfulness, and hardness of the heart. When the sinner realizes his need of a Savior, he is then in a condition to accept Christ as Savior.

Some whose hearts are not hardened by sin (particularly children) easily realize their need of a Savior, and therefore when they hear about Christ's death for them, they readily receive Christ as Savior. Many of the great servants of God were saved in childhood. Charles Spurgeon, on hearing a deacon preach "Look unto me, and be ye saved," (Isa. 45:22) simply looked on Christ by faith and was saved.

Faith and Foolishness

If a person walks to the center of a set of railroad tracks, convinced that he can stop an oncoming train by his strong "faith," he is a fool. That is not faith; that is foolishness. Faith is determined by its object. Likewise, a religion that trusts in a dead leader is foolishness.

Suppose a man wanted to fly from New York to Los Angeles. As he arrives at the airport, he is taken to a hangar where a small single-engine plane is housed. But the airplane seems to be in need of repair. One wing is broken, the fuselage is held together with baling wire, and the tail assembly is missing. A man is seen staggering toward the plane and is asked whether or not he is the pilot. He replies that he has never flown before but that he would be glad to try. Would you have enough "faith" to believe that "pilot" could fly that "plane" with you on board? Is that faith? No, it is foolishness!

Yet often we try to convince ourselves that an unsaved **sincere** man of **great** faith will go to Heaven. It does not matter how sincere; he may be sincerely wrong. It does not matter how strong his faith is, if it is not faith in Christ.

A pharmacist may be sincere when he accidentally gives the wrong medication to a patient. But the patient may die in spite of the pharmacist's sincerity. The quality of faith is determined by the quality of the faith's object.

Lesson
32 Justification, Sanctification, and Adoption

A. Justification

Justification is the judicial act of God whereby He declares the guilty sinner to be righteous and free from guilt and punishment.

JUSTIFICATION

“**Just as if I’d** never sinned!”
“**Just as if I** had died at Calvary!”
“**Just as if I** were Christ!”

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Rom. 4:5

1. Principles of justification

a. The One who has been wronged dictates the terms of justification.

Justification is a judicial term. In a trial, it is the judge who determines what the method of reconciliation will be. The criminal has no right to decide what his punishment will be or what he needs to do to make restitution.

In the same sense, it is God who determines what a person must do in order to make restitution. The sinner has no right to decide his own “plan of salvation.” It is God who has been sinned against; therefore, it is God’s right to prescribe the method of justification. Isn’t it ironic that for centuries man has tried to determine how he can get to Heaven when he dies? He is convinced God’s method is too easy. But it really doesn’t matter how “good” man’s ideas are or how “poor” God’s plan appears. Man has sinned against a holy God Who has determined that a man can be justified only when he accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

b. Man’s justification is based on the merits of Another.

Man in his natural condition cannot stand in God’s presence nor enter Heaven. Apart from Jesus Christ, the sinner is without hope. Jesus Christ is his advocate (lawyer) as well as his substitute. When we are arrayed in the robe of Christ’s righteousness, we can stand before a holy God.

“And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” 1 John 2:1

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” Isa. 61:10

2. Illustrations of justification

a. Philemon and Onesimus

A fascinating story serves as the background to Paul's epistle to Philemon. The story and resulting epistle is an illustration of justification. It seems that Onesimus was a slave who ran away from his master Philemon. He evidently was guilty of stealing from his master. Both his flight and his robbery were punishable by death. In this condition Onesimus met Paul, perhaps while they were both in prison.

> *"I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds."* Philem. 10

As a result of their meeting, Onesimus accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior.

Paul wrote back to Onesimus's master, Philemon, and related the events of Onesimus's conversion. Paul encouraged Philemon to accept the slave as a brother in Christ. Paul then made a statement that pictures justification (being declared innocent although guilty) as well as imputation (having one's goodness or guilt placed on another's account).

> *"For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account."* Philem. 15–18

b. Bride's clothing

In Bible times it was often the custom for the bridegroom to prepare the wedding garment for his bride. She would concentrate on her dowry of jewelry and leave the selection of her bridal gown to her husband. On the day of the wedding, the groom would first wear the outer cloak that he would eventually place over the garments of his bride. This signified that he was receiving her into his care and keeping. What his bride had been wearing earlier would be insignificant. Because of the beautiful garment prepared by the groom and now worn by the bride, it would not be seen.

Jesus Christ has done that for each individual that accepts him as Savior. Our righteousnesses are not sufficient to be justified in His sight.

> *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."* Isa. 64:6

But Jesus Christ, our bridegroom, has prepared for us, His bride, a robe of righteousness. This robe was "woven" at Calvary for those who believe. We stand in God's presence, not in our own righteousness, but in the righteousness of the pure Son of God.

B. Sanctification

Sanctification means “being set apart from the world and unto God’s service.” Sanctification is simply the process of setting something apart. God “sanctified” people, places, and things throughout the Old Testament.

1. Negatively—Separation *from* the world

Sanctification has two phases, negative and positive. The Bible clearly teaches the negative aspect of sanctification. The Christian’s sanctification requires his continual rejection of the world’s temptations.

> *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”* 2 Cor. 6:14
>
> *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”* John 17:16–17
>
> *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”* 1 Pet. 2:9
>
> *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”* 1 John 2:15

IN THE WORLD, NOT *OF* THE WORLD

> *“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”* John 17:15–16

There is a principle in the Word of God that indicates God wants the Christian in the world as a witness without becoming contaminated by the world. Once the Christian loses his testimony, he will find it extremely difficult to witness effectively.

> *“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”* Matt. 5:13

The Scripture is full of examples of men who were so affected by the world around them that they temporarily lost their testimony. These Biblical examples should serve as warnings regarding the importance of sanctification from the world.

1. Noah

His family was saved from the Flood, but shortly afterward they fell into a variety of sins. Noah’s family had been unfortunately affected by the wickedness of their day. Noah got his family out of the world’s system, but he couldn’t get “the world” out of his family.

2. Lot

Although Lot's family survived the destruction of Sodom, the effects of Sodom were evident in their lives. Lot's sons-in-law refused him, his wife turned back, and his daughters committed incest with their father. We see the results of Lot's foolish decision to pitch his tent toward Sodom. He and his family were *in* the world *and of* the world.

3. Moses

After 40 years in the Egyptian palace, Moses determined to lead his people out of Egypt. His desire was to be a missionary, but instead he was a murderer. He handled his problem like an Egyptian. It took a few minutes for God to get Moses out of Egypt; it took 40 years in Midian for God to get "Egypt" (the world) out of Moses. Only then could God really use him as He wanted to use him.

This is an important principle. We are not to be like the world. We as Christians are to be different. The fact that our sins are forgiven makes us different. The fact that we are headed for Heaven makes us different from the vast majority of people in this world. We are to be **sanctified.** The word *saint* has the same root as the word *sanctify* and has the same basic meaning. A *saint* is one who has been "set apart in holiness," set apart from sin by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Positively—Separation unto God's service

> *"And for their sakes I [Jesus] sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth . . . that the world may believe."* John 17:19–21

Sanctification *from* the world is not an end in itself; it is the *means* to an end. Christ sanctified Himself so others will follow. We are to be sanctified from the world in order to serve Christ more effectively and to draw men to the Savior. The purpose of being pure is to show others that Jesus is real and that Christianity is worth living.

The entire Bible can be summarized in one verse:

1 Peter 1:16—"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." We, like Christ, should be holy to show others how they also can be holy in God's sight.

It is not enough to be separated *from* the world. If the priestly garments, the lamb, the tithe, and the items in the tabernacle were never used in God's service, their being "set apart" would be pointless. Each item had a special purpose. It is not enough for the Christian to be separated from the world unless his sanctification results in greater service for God. Sanctification involves a ministry.

3. **Particularly—Sanctification is past, present, and future**

   Sanctification is described in the Bible in three stages.

   a. In the past: Sanctification occurs instantly at the moment of salvation. (Heb. 10:10)

   b. In the present: Sanctification continues as we daily cleanse our lives of sin. (Heb 12:14; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:1, 10; 2 Pet. 3:18)

   c. In the future: Final sanctification occurs as we are saved from the presence of sin. (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30)

   We will finally be "conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). This is also called ***glorification.***

   Our **present** sanctification should be the concern of every Christian. But how can we "work" at being sanctified?

   (1) The study of the Word of God brings sanctification. (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26)

   (2) Surrender to the Lord's Will brings sanctification. (Rom. 12:1, 2)

   As we study God's Word the Lord reveals our sin, shows us Christ's example, and motivates us to follow Him in holiness. Our obligation, then, is to yield ourselves totally to His Will.

   > "Sanctification is brought about in the life of the believer by his separating himself deliberately from all that is unclean and unholy, and by presenting, continually and constantly, the members of his body as holy instruments unto God for the accomplishment of His holy purposes. Thus by these single acts of surrender unto holiness, sanctification soon becomes the habit of the life." —*William Evans*

C. Adoption (Gal. 4:1–5; Eph 1:5–6; Rom. 8:15–23)

Adoption in the Bible is the act of God whereby He places His own child in the position of an adult son. Of all the terms used to describe salvation, this one seems to cause the most confusion. This confusion has resulted from the difference between Biblical adoption and our contemporary idea of adoption. The average person would not understand a child's being both born and adopted into the same family. But that is what was done in Bible times.

The Jews considered a child to be an adult when he reached the age of twelve or thirteen. At that point the father would declare publicly that he was "adopting" his own natural-born son. He was declaring to the world that his son was now responsible for his own actions.

The Romans seem to have had a similar custom. At the age of fourteen, a Roman son was placed on a public platform by his father. His father would make a statement to the effect that his son now had all the privileges and responsibilities of an adult. This appears to be the Biblical idea of adoption.

The Christian is both a natural-born child and an "adopted" child. Our "adoption" by our heavenly Father allows us all the privileges of an adult son. The privilege of adoption carries with it tremendous responsibility. It should motivate us to act worthy of our "family name." We are children of the king, and we should act like it. Our final adoption will take place when we are totally "conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29).

◆

The Greek word for *adoption* means the "placing of a son," not the "making of a son." It is not the taking of a child from another family. It is God's taking one who is already His son and placing him as an adult son with all its privileges and responsibilities.

Jesus Preaching to the Multitude **by Gustave Doré**

Lesson 33

The Blessings of Salvation

Most Christians are unaware of all the wonderful blessings that they possess the moment they accept God's plan of salvation. It takes a few seconds to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," but in that time many wonderful relationships between God and man begin. Those blessings begin at salvation and continue for all eternity. Some blessings are in the future, but many begin immediately.

A. **Heaven** is a blessing of salvation.

When an individual considers the blessings of salvation, this wonderful truth is most likely foremost in his thinking. This, of course, is not the only blessing, but it is very special. When a child is shown the "Wordless Book," he is first shown the last page, the "end of the story." The page is gold in color and represents the street of gold in Heaven. He is told about the wonderful things that will be there and the heartaches that will not be there. By the time that page is explained, the child's spiritual appetite is whetted for information on how he can get there. That is an excellent introduction to the account of sin and God's provision of His only Son.

> *"For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."* Phil. 3:20–21

B. **Being a child of God** is a blessing of salvation.

> *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."* John 1:12

> *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."* Rom. 8:16–17

Our Mansions

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2–3

Our modern concept of a mansion is probably foreign to the Biblical idea. The verses in John 14 have a background in Jewish marriage customs. A Jewish couple would be engaged for approximately one year before they were married. During that time the bride would prepare her dowry while the groom would prepare a place for them to live. The couple's first home was usually an added-on room of his parents' home. This was called a "mansion." That is why Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions [additional rooms]." Someday our bridegroom, Jesus Christ, will return for His bride (all Christians) to take her (us) to His heavenly mansion.

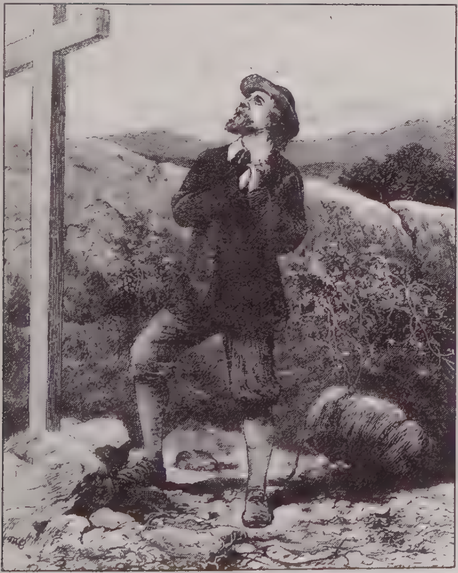
> *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."* 1 John 3:1

The Bible never teaches the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man (i.e., that all human beings are automatically sons of God, and therefore, brothers). However, the Bible does teach that the moment a person accepts Christ as Savior he becomes a child of God. We are born again into the family of God, and all other Christians become brothers and sisters in Christ.

From that time forward a Christian has all the privileges that come to any family member. We are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." As our heavenly Father, God gives us many wonderful promises.

> *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"* Matt. 7:11

C. **Forgiveness of sin** is a blessing of salvation.



"'His burden fell off his back, and began to tumble.'"
by Townley Green (from *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, 1890)

Each Christian must, like the pilgrim, bring his burden of sin to the Cross.

Perhaps one of the greatest immediate blessings of salvation is the realization that all our sins are under the blood of Jesus Christ. In his *Pilgrim's Progress* John Bunyan pictures sin as a terrible burden. What joy floods the soul of each Christian when that burden is laid at the cross of Calvary. For the dedicated Christian it is hard to imagine anyone wanting to hang on to that burden. How ironic it is that sometimes those who have been saved **from** sin wish occasionally to return **to** sin. The Bible describes this foolishness in very graphic terms—"But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." How tragic that some Christians are guilty of living like the unsaved!

D. **Peace with God** is a blessing of salvation.

> *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."* John 14:27
>
> *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* Phil. 4:7

This world is looking for peace, yet they will not find it until they accept the Prince of Peace as their Savior. People will try almost anything to fill the void in their lives which results when they reject God's salvation offer. But the things they hope will bring peace never do. People will never be able to understand what they are missing until they become Christians.

E. **Being accepted by the Lord** is a blessing of salvation.

> *"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."* Eph. 1:6

Every young person wants to be accepted. Peer pressure is strong at any age, but it affects the teen-ager especially. Most teen-agers fear a new situation because it presents a new challenge to being "accepted."

More important than being accepted by the crowd is being accepted by God. Popularity is fleeting. A president may be elected by an overwhelming "popular" vote and yet become one of the most unpopular presidents eighteen months later. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36) The Christian has the wonderful position of being "accepted in the beloved."

THE INFLUENCE OF PEER PRESSURE

"The influence of peer pressure is best illustrated by a study of teen-agers, conducted by Ruth W. Berenda. She and her associates brought ten adolescents into a room and told them they were going to study their perception. To test this ability, they planned to hold up cards on which three lines were drawn. The lines were marked A, B, and C and were of three different lengths. As the cards were held before the class, the researcher would point to A, B, and C consecutively, asking the students to raise their hands when the pointer was directed at the longest line.

The instructions were simple and were repeated. 'Raise your hand when we point to the longest line.' What one student didn't know, however, is that the other nine had been brought in earlier and told to vote for the second largest line. The purpose was to test the effect of group pressure on that lonely individual.

The experiment began with nine teen-agers voting for the wrong line. The stooge would typically glance around, frown in confusion, and slip his hand up with the group. The instructions were repeated and the next card was raised. Time after time, the self-conscious stooge would sit there saying a short line is longer than a long line, simply because he lacked the courage to challenge the group. This conformity occurred in about seventy-five percent of the cases. Berenda concluded that, 'Some people had rather be president than right.' "

—*Dr. James Dobson, Hide and Seek*
(Fleming H. Revell, 1974), pp. 116–117.

F. **Access to God** is a blessing of salvation.

One of the greatest blessings of the child of God is the blessing of **prayer.** In prayer we as Christians have the privilege of asking God to meet our every need. We should daily take advantage of this wonderful opportunity. "Ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2).

> *"For through him [Jesus Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."* Eph. 2:18
>
> *"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."* Eph. 3:12
>
> *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."* Heb. 4:16

1. We may come **boldly.** (Heb. 4:16)

   The Christian has the privilege of daily coming into God's presence. The word "boldly" does not mean "brazenly" or "boastfully." The same word was used of the apostles as they preached the gospel in the book of Acts. It means "without fear" and "straight to the point." We may approach God without fear. We should speak in a normal conversational tone when we talk with God. We cannot impress God with an abnormal vocabulary. We simply ask Him to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

2. We may come **as a child comes to his father.** (Luke 11:11–13)

   Just as an earthly father wants the best for his children, so our heavenly Father wants the best for us. If He withholds something from us, it is because He knows it is not in our best interest.

   > *"And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day."* Deut. 6:24

3. We may come **as a friend.** (Luke 11:5–11; Exod. 33:11)

4. We may come **with earnestness.** (Job 23:4–7; Isa. 45:11)

   > *"I [Job] would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments."* Job 23:4
   >
   > *"Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me."* Isa. 45:11

   The words that are used in these passages (argument, command) indicate a "discourse designed to convince or to persuade." They are the reasons offered to God as proof of our need. We do not argue with or command God to do anything. The idea seems to be that as we come to God we need to have the reasons for our petitions ready. If it is not His will, He will take away the desire and give us peace about our unanswered prayer.

G. **Victory over sin** is a blessing of salvation. 1 John 5:4

One reason some people do not accept God's plan of salvation is they have convinced themselves that they cannot live the Christian life. And they are right. No one can live the Christian life until he is first saved. Not until Christ takes up residence in one's life can a person consistently be victorious over Satan.

> *"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."* 1 John 4:4

PRAYER

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Utter'd or unexpress'd;
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways;
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, "Behold he prays!"

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watch-word at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

The saints in prayer appear as one,
In word, in deed, and mind,
While with the Father and the Son
Sweet fellowship they find.

Nor prayer is made of earth alone;
The Holy Spirit pleads,
And Jesus, on the eternal throne,
For sinners intercedes.

O Thou, by whom we come to God,
The life, the truth, the way!
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod:
Lord, teach us how to pray!

—*James Montgomery* (1771–1854)

H. **Fellowship with God** is a blessing of salvation.

> *"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."* 1 John 1:3
>
> *"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them."* Rev. 21:3

The greatest joy of Heaven will not be the streets of gold nor the reunion with loved ones, although these indeed will be wonderful. The greatest blessing is that we will be with God forever. The words "mansion" (John 14:1–3) and "abide" (John 15) come from the same root in the Greek language. We can have a taste of Heaven now by learning to "abide" in Christ. But someday when we see Him "as He is," it will be the ultimate blessing of salvation.

Fanny J. Crosby

Fanny Crosby was blinded as a child when a nurse accidentally put the wrong medication in her eyes. She rose above her handicap and became one of the greatest hymn writers the world has ever known. On one occasion D. L. Moody asked her the question, "If you could have one wish in all the world, what would it be?" He, of course, expected her to say that she would like to have her eyesight back.

He was obviously shocked when she replied instead, "If I could have one wish it would be to remain blind the rest of my life so that when I died the first person I would ever see would be the lovely face of my Savior." One of her hymns, "I Shall Know Him," had that idea as its theme.

Lesson 34 Assurance of Salvation

A. The blessing of assurance of salvation

No greater peace comes to the Christian than when he **knows** he is saved. Because God wants every believer to be free from doubt, He inspired the first epistle of John. The theme of 1 John is assurance of salvation.

> *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."* 1 John 5:13

The fact that men of the Bible knew they were saved gives us confidence that we can also know. God wants us to live a life of peace, not a life of turmoil. He gave us His Word in order that we could have confidence that our home in Heaven is assured.

> *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* John 14:1–3

B. The condition of lack of assurance of salvation

1. Lack of assurance is **a common problem.**

It is not unusual for a Christian to have doubts about his salvation. The average Christian will have at least one time in his life when he doubts whether or not he is saved. For a young child this may occur every time he sins. He has the mistaken idea that Jesus leaves him every time he does something wrong. For others, doubts arise because of a confusion in terminology regarding the requirements for salvation. Are those with a strong sense of assurance more spiritual than those who consistently doubt? Of course not. Many great Christians of the past have had times when they seriously doubted their salvation.

It is never wrong to examine one's salvation.

> *"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."* 2 Pet. 1:10

> *"And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."* 1 John 3:19

A Christian should not be embarrassed about doubting his salvation. The issue is too important to try to conceal out of embarrassment.

2. Lack of assurance is **a serious problem.**

A lack of assurance should not be taken lightly. One should never minimize this problem, whether it is one's own or another's. One good rule-of-thumb is this: It is dangerous for a well-meaning counselor to give assurance based on his knowledge of the character of the doubter. "Why, of course, you're saved, you've been in church for years." "Now, I remember the day you came forward when you were five years old." That type of counsel has never helped anyone.

Dr. Bill Rice III tells of the time he came forward in one of his dad's services. His father met him at the altar and asked him if he knew for sure he was saved. "My own father did not take my salvation for granted." If an individual has doubts about salvation, we should not be guilty of giving him a false assurance.

Doubts occasionally arise as the result of comparing our experience with someone else's. But no two experiences are necessarily the same. Some people cry when they receive Christ as Savior; others jump up and down; and still others show very little emotion. The same variety of reactions can be seen in the spectators of a basketball game. Although they are all watching the same game, they may react totally differently when their team wins. Some may shout; others may laugh; the coach might cry; and yet others may do absolutely nothing. God has made each person unique, and that fact needs to be accepted in one's comparison of salvation experiences.

C. The cause of lack of assurance of salvation

1. Youth

The majority of Christians are saved when they are very young. Many have grown up in homes where they have been taught the Bible from the very first days of their lives. There are two ingredients that result in doubts later in life:

- Childlike faith brings many to salvation between the ages of four and seven.
- Most children remember very little about events in their lives before the age of five. Child psychologists have shown that children blinded before the age of six never report visual memories.

As a result, many teen-agers who were saved when they were young cannot remember the events of their salvation. This seems to be a major cause of doubts. This problem is often increased by a well-meaning preacher who says: "Unless you can remember the exact time and place of your salvation, you are not saved."

2. Tenderness

God gives to the Christian a tender heart toward the things of the Lord. Satan often is the master of using this spiritual asset to his own advantage. A Christian will often be moved by the preaching of God's Word. That is the way it ought to be. But sometimes the Christian interprets that as conviction about his need for salvation. The Bible will continue to touch our hearts after salvation. Getting saved does not make one hardened to God's truth and the moving of the Holy Spirit. The cross of Calvary should always touch our hearts. A message on Hell should move us every time we hear it. But that should not necessarily be interpreted as conviction about salvation.

Often doubts and a tender heart are the very indication that a person *is* saved. Often those who care enough to doubt are saved. Those who never care are the ones who need salvation.

3. Shocking Conversions

Another cause of doubt occurs when some "prominent Christian" announces that he was, in reality, never saved until "yesterday." This often creates a contagious reaction: "If he was not saved, then I must not be saved!" But there is a problem here. The reason doubts arise is that we tend to compare his outward reputation to our inward knowledge of ourselves. We will always look worse in that kind of comparison. We know ourselves too well. The thinking goes like this: "If he (who is so good) was not really saved, then I (who am so bad) must also not be really saved." But that is basing our salvation on works. We can be thankful that another individual now has the peace of God that he has not had up to that point. But that should in no way shake our assurance of salvation. Our salvation is based on our believing what Christ has commanded, not on another person's need for salvation. Our salvation is not determined by people, but by a Person.

D. The cure for lack of assurance of salvation

1. Testimonies of God's men

There is no agony so great as that of a spiritual Christian who is having serious battles concerning his salvation experience. God wants us to **know** that we are saved. Christ knows who belongs to Him, and He wants us to know that we are His.

> *"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."*
> John 10:14

a. John knew he was saved.

> *"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."* 1 John 4:13

b. Simon Peter knew he was saved.

> *"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me."* 2 Pet. 1:14

c. Paul knew he was saved.

> *"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."* 2 Tim. 1:12

2. Tests of God's Word

a. Desire for obedience

One proof of salvation is a desire to obey God's Word. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in your life at salvation (1 John 4:13). The Christian can no longer enjoy a life of habitual sin. Do you want to do what is right? Do you want to obey? Does the prospect of one day being sinless in Heaven thrill your soul? The sinner sins and enjoys it. The Christian cannot enjoy sin for long because he cannot continue in the same sin without knowing the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

> *"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. . . . He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."* 1 John 2:3–6

b. Experiencing inner conflict

Often an inner concern about one's salvation is a **confirmation** of salvation in the life. A conflict requires two sides. The unsaved individual has only one nature; the Christian has two natures. A conflict like Paul experienced may be a good test of assurance.

> *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."* Rom. 7:18

c. Loving the right things

(1) Love for God (Rom. 8:5–9)

(2) Love for God's Word (John 8:47)

(3) Love for God's people (1 John 3:14)

d. Illumination of the Word of God (1 John 3:24; 4:13; 5:6)

Do you have some understanding of the Word of God? Although you will never understand it all, you have the Holy Spirit as your teacher. The unsaved person does not understand much, if any, of God's Word. An understanding of God's Word is a good indication of salvation.

> *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* 1 Cor. 2:14

e. Your present belief (John 6:47; 1 John 5:4–13, 24)

One of the best questions to ask the young person who cannot remember the time and place of his salvation is this: "What are you ***today*** believing in to get you to Heaven?" The verb in 1 John 5:13 is in the present tense—"These things have I written unto you that believe (are now believing) on the name of the Son of God; that ye may ***know*** that ye have eternal life." What do you believe today? What are you trusting in today? If you are "now believing" in Christ, you are saved.

CHAPTER 7

THIRTY NINE
HISTORY
LAW
OLD TESTAMENT
HISTORY
POETRY
BOOKS
MAJOR PROPHETS
MINOR PROPHETS
TWENTY SEVEN
NEW TESTAMENT
EPISTLES
LETTERS
BOOKS
PROPHECY

Ecclesiology

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Lesson 35 What Is the Church?

The word *ecclesiology* is derived from the Greek words for "church" (*ekklesia*) and "doctrine" (*logos*). The Greek word for church is first found in Matthew 16:18 when Christ promised to give His power to the church. The doctrine of the church covers the Bible's use of the word *church,* its characteristics, leadership, and ordinances.

A. Definitions of the words for church

1. ***Ekklesia*** (ek′lă•sē′a*)*

   This is the most common New Testament Greek word for church. It means "called out" or "separated"; a church is a group of people called out from the world and separated unto Jesus Christ. A church is not a building, but a people. The church is not technically the "house of God."

   > *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"* 1 Kings 8:27

   The Bible speaks of the Christian's body, not the church building, as being the "temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 6:19).

2. ***Kuriakon*** (kür′ĭ•ä′kōn)

   This New Testament Greek word for church (used in 1 Cor. 11:20 and Rev. 1:10) means "belonging to the Lord." A church belongs to the Lord and is composed of people who have been born again into God's family. German scholars translated this Greek word *kirche,* from which we get our English word *church.*

B. Differences in the Bible's use of the word *church*

1. **The universal church**

   In one sense the Bible speaks of one large church made up of all who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life (1 Cor. 12:13).

   a. Christ's promise was of a singular church.

   > *"Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* Matt. 16:18

   b. Paul was grieved because of his persecution of the church in general.

> *"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."* 1 Cor. 15:9
>
> *"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it."* Gal. 1:13

c. The church is called the body of Christ.

> *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."* Eph. 5:23

d. Christ is the cornerstone of the church.

> *"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."* Eph. 2:20

e. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.

> *"Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. . . . For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. . . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."* Eph. 5:25–32

2. The local church

In the vast majority of cases, the Biblical use of the word *church* refers to a local congregation of believers. They meet in a given locality for the purposes outlined in Acts 2:42–47.

a. There was a local church in Jerusalem. (Acts 2:42–47; 8:1)

This early church experienced phenomenal growth. Three thousand were saved on the day of Pentecost and five thousand shortly thereafter. Since no building could house all of these new converts, they met in hundreds of different homes. The apostles would travel from house to house preaching, teaching, and administering the Lord's Supper. They initially had services daily to allow everyone the opportunity to attend a church service. Each apostle may have been responsible for several services each day.

> *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*
> Acts 1:8

But the disciples failed to obey the great commission of Acts 1:8. They were satisfied with their Jerusalem but had neglected Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8 indicates that our obligation is to **both** our home country **and** the foreign field. A true missionary outlook must be worldwide. Although those apostles had "filled Jerusalem with [their] doctrine" (Acts 5:28), they did not yet have a worldwide vision of souls going to Hell.

God's command was to go into all the world. Nowhere does God demand the saturation of our "Jerusalem" before we can evangelize our "Judaea." It seems that God's method was to bring persecution upon the early church to force them to be more mission-minded. It is interesting to note how Acts 8:1, 4 show the fulfillment of Acts 1:8 by mentioning the very same regions that Christ did in Acts 1:8.

> *"They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria."* Acts 8:1
>
> *"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."* Acts 8:4

Acts 1:8 gives us a simple outline of the book of Acts.

Jerusalem—Acts 1–4
Judaea—Acts 5–7 (5:16)
Samaria—Acts 8
Earth—Acts 9–28

b. There was a local church in Antioch. (Acts 11:19–26)

It was at this local church that believers were first called "Christians" (Acts 11:26) This church was not as large as the church in Jerusalem, but they were more mission-minded. The missionary spirit of Antioch's church is seen in her membership and leadership, a cross-section of nationalities and cultures. Paul was from Cilicia, Barnabas from Cyprus, and two of her leaders were probably black—"Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene" (Acts 11:20; 13:1).

It was the church at Antioch that confirmed the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas by the Holy Spirit. It was this church that faithfully supported these missionaries and to which the missionaries always returned after their journeys. It is often seen to be the same today. It is not always the largest church that is the most interested in the support of missions. Many missionaries are on the field today because of the faithfulness of God's smaller churches all across this country.

c. There were local churches established by Paul.

(1) Ephesus—Acts 20:17
(2) Corinth—1 Cor. 1:1–2; 2 Cor. 1:1
(3) Thessalonica—1 Thess. 1:1

d. There were local churches in Asia Minor. (Rev. 2–3)

(1) Ephesus
(2) Smyrna
(3) Pergamos
(4) Thyatira
(5) Sardis
(6) Philadelphia
(7) Laodicea

C. Design of the church of God

1. It is to **glorify God.**

   > *"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."* Eph. 3:21

2. It is to **edify its membership.**

   > *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ."* Eph. 4:11–12

3. It is to **purify its membership.**

   > *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* Eph. 5:25–27

   > *"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together . . . Purge out therefore the old leaven."* 1 Cor. 5:4, 7

4. It is to **evangelize the world.**

   > *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* Matt. 28:19–20

5. It is to **retard corruption in the world.**

   > *"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."* Matt. 5:13

D. Descriptions of the church in the Bible

1. It is described as **the body of Christ.** (Read 1 Cor. 12:12–31.)

   a. The body of Christ consists of diversity.

   In verses 12–19 of 1 Corinthians 12 Paul pictures the church as the body of Christ. As the body has many members, so the church has many members. Each member has a different job to do, but each is just as important. Science is just beginning to understand that parts of the body that were once thought to be unnecessary are vitally important. At one time, there were about 180 parts of the body which evolutionists classified as ***vestigial*** [vĕs•tĭj′ĭ•*a*l], or serving no useful purpose today. Now scientists realize that there are no vestigial organs, only organs that we do not yet fully understand. Twenty years ago tonsillectomies were commonly done, but today they are not performed as readily. Science has discovered that the liver alone has over 500 important functions in the human body. Our nose is thought to be what causes us to shift position throughout the night as we sleep. Without it we would wake up sore from sleeping in the same position all night.

So it is in the church. Some may feel their position is not important, but that simply is not so. Not everyone can be the preacher. If that were true, no one would be available to listen to the message. Each responsibility is important, and God will reward the faithfulness of all His servants. There are no "vestigial organs" in the body of Christ.

> *"Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary."* 1 Cor. 12:22

b. The body of Christ consists of unity.

But this passage also teaches that there is unity in diversity. Verses 20–31 indicate the problem that arises when one member wishes to be another member. The body cannot function properly in the face of jealousy. We should not view our position as man views it but see it from God's point of view. To truly fulfill this passage, the members of a church must realize the need for mutual dependence and mutual respect. The members of a church should faithfully meet the needs of its membership.

2. It is described as **the building of Christ.**

Although a church is not a building but a people saved and set apart, the Bible does use a building as a symbol of the church. Just as a building has many different parts, so the church of Jesus Christ has several key elements.

Remember that in Biblical symbolism different pictures can be used to illustrate a truth. This is especially true of symbols of Christ. No one symbol could possibly picture the Savior in all His glorious aspects. In one passage He is pictured as the Lamb, in another passage as the Shepherd. In regards to the church He is pictured in different contexts as the **Cornerstone** of the building (the church), the **Foundation** of the building (the church), and the **Builder** of the church.

a. The Cornerstone

The cornerstone (in Bible times) was a key foundational stone, often not seen after the building's completion, which solidified the entire foundation.

> *"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner."* Ps. 118:22

> *"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner."* 1 Pet. 2:6–7

The cornerstone of the church is Jesus Christ, "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3). But if the church will "fall on this stone" in submission she will "be broken" (Matt. 21:44), a vessel fit for the Master's use.

b. The Builder

"I [Jesus Christ] will build my church." Matt. 16:18

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" Eph. 2:20

In this particular symbolic picture, Christ is the Builder and the apostles and preachers are the foundation. Christ is the power in the church. Without the Builder the building will accomplish nothing of eternal value.

c. The Foundation

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3: 11

In this passage Christ is pictured as the foundation of the church. Without the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the church has no Biblical foundation. A group that does not base its beliefs on the sound foundation of Christ and His Word has no right to call itself a church.

3. It is described as **the bride of Christ.** (Eph. 5:25–31; John 14:1–3; Rev. 19:7)

One of the most beautiful pictures of the church is that of Christ's bride. The story behind the Song of Solomon illustrates this symbol admirably.

It seems that in the Song of Solomon a young girl falls in love with a simple shepherd. The more they are together the more they realize that their love is growing. The young lady feels unworthy of this person's love, because she has spent so much time working in the vineyard next to the palace of the king that her skin has become quite darkened. The shepherd must go away for a time, but he promises this young lady that he will soon return and take her for his wife. She counts the days before he is to return, not knowing for sure exactly when that will be.

One day as she is working in the vineyard she sees the entourage of the king approaching with the king close behind. Again she is embarrassed, because she has never actually seen the king. She is shocked as the king approaches her and even more shocked as she realizes that this is the same person who had come dressed as a shepherd several weeks earlier. Her shepherd is the king now, and he is coming to claim her for his own. She becomes his bride and goes to live in his palace for the rest of her life.

This is exactly the idea that the Bible presents concerning Jesus Christ. He came the first time as the simple shepherd, but when He returns again He will be coming as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to take His bride to His heavenly palace.

The parallels are amazing. In Bible times a young man and woman would become espoused for a period of one year (cf. Mary and Joseph). During that time the bridegroom-to-be would build an additional room onto the house of his father so they could come to live there after their marriage. Interestingly, that additional room was called a "mansion." Christ said that "**in** my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2). Heaven will be made up of beautiful living quarters that are next to our bridegroom Jesus Christ.

When the day finally arrived, the bridegroom would make his journey from his house to the house of his bride. His arrival would often be accompanied by a shout and a trumpet sound (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13–18; 1 Cor. 15:51–58). He would then escort his bride to their new abode.

E. The relationship of the church to civil government

The early church was a persecuted church, and yet it thrived. Sometimes the persecution arose from the religious leaders of the Jewish Sanhedrin (Acts 5:29); at other times it arose as oppression from a hostile government (Acts 12:1–2). History records ten periods of Roman persecution, beginning with Nero and ending with Diocletian. Although few would suggest that the church in America today suffers as the early church did, it is important that we understand the church's relationship to government.

1. God instituted government for the welfare of man.

G. Doré
H. PISAN

The Death of Abel **by Gustave Doré**
". . . Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him." *Gen. 4:8*

After the Fall of man it became evident that mankind could not live in harmony if conscience was the only guide. For sixteen centuries, acts of violence grew to such proportions that God had to send a worldwide Flood in order to purge this world of the results of man's passions.

After the Flood, God established civil government by instituting the death penalty (capital punishment) for murder.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Gen. 9:6

God again taught the sanctity of human life and reminded us of the reason for its value: man was made in the image of God. Human life is so precious to God that a murderer must forfeit his life at the hands of God's delegated authority. God ordained that men should establish laws to restrain the evil which had accelerated since man's fall.

◆

"A Christian view of civil government must always steadily and consistently hold to the fact that human society is a society of fallen beings, under the just judgment of God. The perfection of society cannot be either promised or attained, and it is not the purpose of civil government to do so. The Christian religion, on the basis of Scripture, is committed to the doctrine that under the condition of sin man is non-perfectible, either individually or collectively. Any other view is utopian. Certain improvements of relationship are possible. They are indeed, prescribed by Scripture. But the possibilities are not unlimited. This fact, introduced early in Holy Scripture, is of paramount importance to any interpretation of civil government in the Bible."

—Robert D. Culver,
Toward a Biblical View of Civil Government

◆

2. **God instituted government as a representative of His authority.**

   The church should respond to governmental authority the way she responds to God's authority. The Bible teaches a twofold response to government:

   a. We are to pray for those in authority over us.

   > *"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."* 1 Tim. 2:1–2

   b. We are to respect governmental authority as we respect God's authority.

   > *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers [governing authorities]. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation [condemnation or judgment]. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister [servant] of God, a revenger to execute wrath [punishment] upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers,*

> *attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."* Rom. 13:1–7

But what if the church does not agree with the human authority that is in power? The Bible teaches that it makes no difference. A child is to obey his parents even when he doesn't agree with them.

The Bible never stipulates that Christians obey only good or just rulers or laws. All governmental rulers are ordained of God and are, therefore, worthy of proper honor.

> *"He [God] removeth kings, and setteth up kings."* Dan. 2:21
>
> *"The most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and . . . appointeth over it whomsoever he will."* Dan. 5:21

3. God requires the proper response to hostile government.

A government is hostile to the church when it ordains a civil law which clearly opposes a command of God. The Bible illustrates the tension between God's law and man's law in the lives of Moses (Exod. 1–13), Daniel (Dan. 6), the three friends of Daniel (Dan. 3), and the apostle Paul (Acts 24–26). The rulers under whom they lived were certainly not godly men. We need to remember that when Paul wrote Romans 13:1–7 Nero was ruling the Roman empire. What should the church do when government demands the breaking of God's law?

The Bible indicates that although some Bible characters disobeyed certain commands of government, they did it in obedience to God. The only time obedience to government must be denied is when it would mean clear, direct disobedience to God.

But Christians today must recognize the spirit in which these men disobeyed the governmental authority. Daniel's attitude was one of humility and submission as he descended into the den of lions. Daniel's friends walked willingly into the fiery furnace. Paul patiently waited for the executioner who would usher him into the presence of his Savior. We must be willing to stand for God and still respect the governmental authorities even in their persecution of the church of Jesus Christ. If we cannot obey both God and the government, we must obey God, but we must be respectful and willing to take the persecution.

> *"But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; . . . For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing."* 1 Pet. 3:14, 17

Lesson

36 The Officers of the Church

The only two offices of the local church mentioned in the Bible are those of the **pastor** and the **deacon.** Other positions may be assigned to help the church in its ministry to the world, such as *trustees,* who are legal representatives of the incorporated church rather than Scriptural representatives. Trustees represent the church on financial and legal documents.

A. Pastor

1. Biblical terms to describe the pastor

a. Pastor

The word means **"shepherd."** The pastor is to lead his people as a shepherd would his sheep. He is never to drive them or run before them.

> *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* Acts 20:28

b. Bishop

This word emphasizes the idea of his being an **overseer** of the house of God.

> *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof."* 1 Pet. 5:2

c. Elder

The word *elder* gives the idea of a man's mature leadership ability.

> *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."* 1 Tim. 5:17

2. Biblical qualifications of the pastor (Read 1 Tim. 3:1–7.)

a. Desire

> *"If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."* 1 Tim. 3:1

Not every pastor initially had that desire, but as that man submitted himself to God's call, the desire eventually came.

> "The first sign of the heavenly calling is an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work. In order to be a true call to the ministry there must be an irresistible, overwhelming craving and raging thirst for telling to others what God has done to our own souls." He went on to say that "the desire must be a thoughtful one. It should not be a sudden impulse unattended by anxious consideration. It should be the outgrowth of our heart in its best moments, the object of our reverent aspirations, the subject of our most fervent prayers. It must continue with us when tempting offers of wealth and comfort come into conflict with it, and remain as a calm, clear-headed resolve after everything has been estimated at its right figure, and the cost thoroughly counted."
>
> —*C. H. Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students,* pp. 26–27

b. Blamelessness

"A bishop then must be blameless." 1 Tim. 3:2

This word is the key to everything else that follows. The Lord realizes that whenever a man begins giving instructions to others he will be consistently critiqued by those under his leadership. Human nature demands a pastor who "practices what he preaches." The word "blameless" does not mean "sinless." No one is perfect. The idea is that he is above reproach or not "open to attack." There should be nothing in his testimony before the church or the world which is open to question. The remainder of 1 Tim. 3:1–7 shows in what areas a pastor must be "blameless."

c. Husband of one wife

"A bishop then must be . . . the husband of one wife." 1 Tim. 3:2

The phrase actually means "a one-woman-type man." The idea is that, whether married or not, he has the attitude of faithfulness to one woman. This passage does not require him to be married any more than verse four requires a childless couple to have children. But it does seem to indicate that a divorced man should not be the pastor of a church. From a practical standpoint, this makes sense. How can he be "blameless" as he counsels others with marriage problems, if he himself has not been successful in that area of his life?

d. Sober

"A bishop then must be . . . sober." 1 Tim. 3:2

The pastor must have common sense and be serious-minded about eternal matters.

e. Given to hospitality

"A bishop then must be . . . . given to hospitality." 1 Tim. 3:2

The pastor should be able to make friends easily and show his brotherly love by an openhearted and generous nature. He should always be in control of the situation lest he give offense.

f. Apt to teach

"A bishop then must be . . . apt to teach." 1 Tim. 3:2

A pastor must have an ability in this area. His main responsibility is to feed the flock of God with spiritual food. He is responsible to "edify" the saints (Eph. 4:12). The words "pastors and teachers" are so linked in the Greek of Ephesians 4:11 as to indicate that they are one and the same responsibility.

> "There must be an aptness to teach and some measure of the other qualities needful for the office of a public instructor. A man to prove his call must make a successful trial of these. I do not claim that the first time a man rises to speak he must preach as well as Robert Hall [English pulpit orator of the early eighteenth century] did in his later days. If he preaches no worse than that great man did at the first, he must not be

> condemned. You are aware that Robert Hall broke down altogether three times, and cried, 'If this does not humble me, nothing will.' Some of the noblest speakers were not in their early days the most fluent. Even Cicero at first suffered from a weak voice and a difficulty of utterance." —*C. H. Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students,* p. 28

g. Not given to wine

> *"A bishop then must be . . . not given to wine."* 1 Tim. 3:2–3

In the Greek these words have the idea of "not attending wild, drunken parties." He should never be one who associates with the wrong crowd nor gives himself to worldliness.

h. No striker

> *"A bishop then must be . . . no striker."* 1 Tim. 3:2–3

The pastor should never take vengeance into his own hands. His public and private manners should be mild.

i. Not greedy of filthy lucre

> *"A bishop then must be . . . not greedy of filthy lucre."* 1 Tim. 3:2–3

A good pastor should never make money an issue of his ministry nor be a lover of money.

j. One that ruleth well his own house

> *"A bishop then must be . . . one that ruleth well his own house."* 1 Tim. 3:2–4

The raising of a pastor's children is a constant challenge. The idea in 1 Timothy 3 does not seem to be that if his children temporarily step out of line, he must resign from the ministry. Childrearing is a lifetime proposition. If his children are continuously rebellious, it will be difficult to remain "blameless" in counseling his members on the Biblical methodology of raising children.

> *"For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"* 1 Tim. 3:5

It must also be remembered that in the first century a twelve-year-old child was considered completely responsible for his own actions.

k. Not a novice

> *"The bishop then must be . . . not a novice."* 1 Tim. 3:2–6

The pastor should not be a new Christian lest he be "lifted up with pride." Occasionally a new Christian is placed in a position of leadership by well-meaning church members, but the Bible indicates this is not wise church polity.

l. Of good report

> *"A bishop then must be . . . of good report."* 1 Tim. 3:2–7

In Bible times only men in the local church who were of good report were considered as candidates for the pastorate (Acts 6:3; 14:23). Once the church approved of them, they were ordained to the ministry in a service which included the laying on of the hands of the church leadership as a sign of dedication (Acts 13:3; 1 Tim. 4:14; Titus 1:5). Today most pastors are ordained to the ministry by appearing before an ordination council. This council consists of ordained ministers who ask the pastoral candidate questions to see if he has a good understanding of Bible doctrine. If the candidate is approved by the council, he is then ordained publicly by the local church.

3. Biblical duties of the pastor

- **a.** To be an example (1 Pet. 5:2, 3)
- **b.** To rule (1 Tim. 5:17)
- **c.** To guard right doctrine (Titus 1:9)
- **d.** To "perfect" (help mature) the saints (Eph. 4:12)
- **e.** To "edify" (build up) the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12)
- **f.** To "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2)

B. Deacon

1. Biblical term

The word deacon means "servant." The deacon is not to rule as the pastor rules. The office of deacon was instituted so the pastor would have more time to pray and minister the Word.

> *"It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."* Acts 6:2–3

These deacons were to "serve" by eliminating from the pastor's duties tedious responsibilities that very quickly increased as the size of the congregation grew.

2. Qualifications (Read 1 Tim. 3:8–13.)

Because of his leadership position, many of the qualifications of the deacon are similar to those of the pastor. He must be first and foremost "blameless" (1 Tim. 3:10).

The wife of the deacon is given several responsibilities in verse 11. Although some churches have deaconesses (to help with church functions), they are not considered a separate office. 1 Timothy 3:11 refers, not to a deaconess, but to a deacon's wife.

3. Duties

The primary duty of the deacon was to serve. His responsibility was primarily secular in nature, although spiritual in God's sight. He was to take care of the menial tasks so as to allow the pastor time to study the Word of God and to pray. Today the primary function of the deacon is often an advisory capacity.

Lesson

37 The Ordinances of the Church

An **ordinance** is an outward duty prescribed by Christ to be performed by His Church. The churches of the New Testament practiced only two ordinances: ***baptism*** and the ***Lord's Supper.***

A. Baptism

1. Definition of baptism

The word *baptize* (*baptizo* in Greek) means "to dip under," or "to immerse." Baptism is a symbol of the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

> *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* Rom. 6:3–4
>
> *"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."* Col. 2:12

In baptism, the believer is testifying that he was "in Christ" when He died on the cross, that he was buried with Him, and that he has arisen to newness of life because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2. **Prerequisites** of baptism

a. Instruction

> *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."* Matt. 28:19
>
> *"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* Acts 8:35–37

Before a person can be baptized, he must understand enough to be saved. If he has a good background in the Bible, that instruction may be minimal. But like the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:35–37, some people will need much detailed instruction before they will understand God's way of salvation. Missionaries have reported that in some cultures the instruction of a national may take years before he is ready to become a Christian.

b. Faith

Once a person has been instructed in the way of salvation and has accepted Christ as his Savior, he is ready to follow the Lord in believer's baptism. The Bible order is always salvation first, then baptism.

> *"Then they that gladly received his word [by faith] were baptized."* Acts 2:41
>
> *"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest [be baptized]."* Acts 8:37

A person does not need to have a **full** understanding of the Scripture before he is saved and baptized. That understanding comes with time. Like the Ethiopian eunuch, an individual must believe that Jesus Christ is God and died for his sins. Simple faith in Christ is the primary prerequisite for baptism.

In many foreign countries, following the Lord in baptism is a real test of a convert's faith. By baptism he is publicly identifying himself with a group whose beliefs are contrary to the religion of his country and family. Many a new Christian has been "declared to be dead" when he follows the Lord in believer's baptism.

3. **Practical principles** of baptism

Does a person *have* to be baptized in a local church?

Can *any* Christian baptize another Christian?

The answers to these questions are not obvious in Scripture. It should be noted, however, that baptism is an ordinance given to the **church** and therefore needs to be tied in to the membership of that local church (Acts 2:41). Appropriateness would seem to dictate that if anyone could baptize anywhere, the ordinance would soon lose the special honor that comes when God's ordained minister performs his God-given duty.

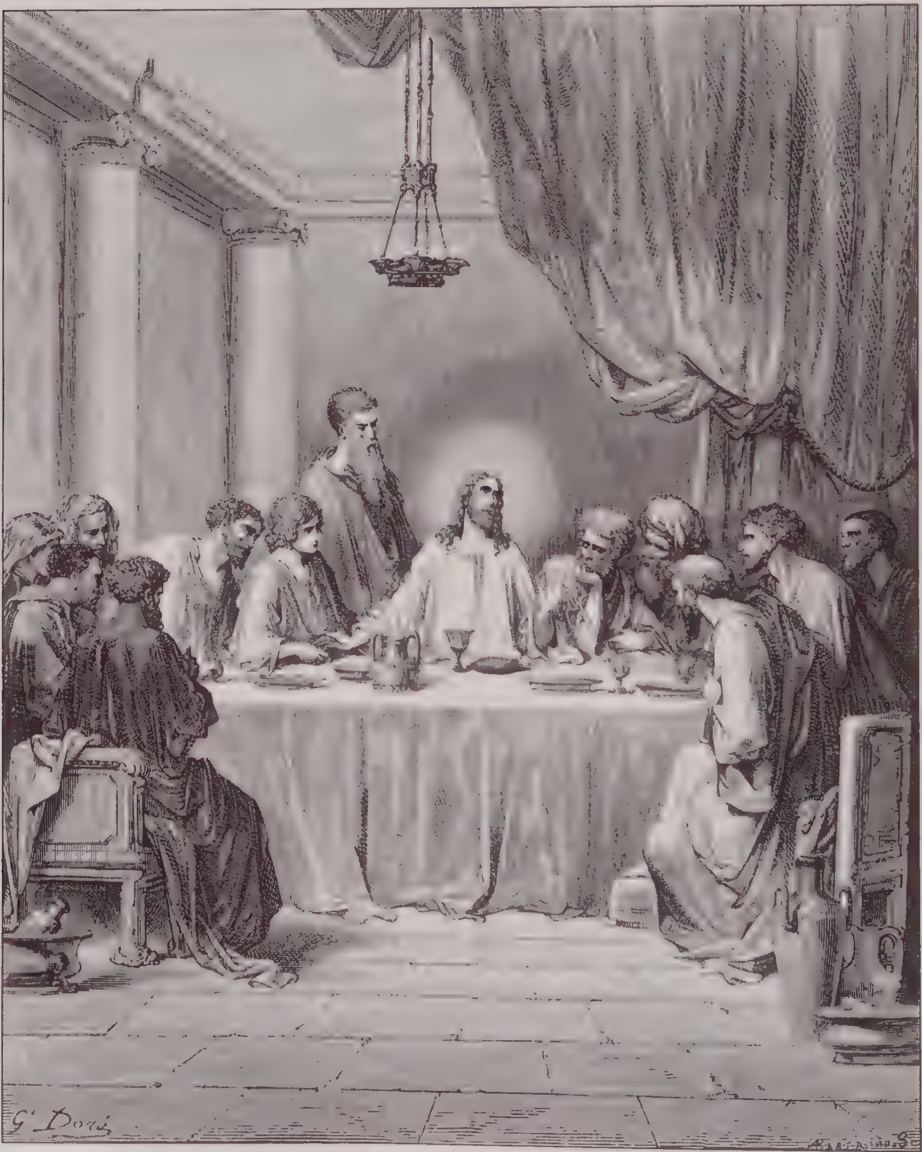
B. The Lord's Supper

1. **Explanation** of the Lord's Supper

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is mentioned in each of the first three gospels (Matt. 26:26–30; Mark 14:22–26; Luke 22:17–20). It was instituted by Jesus on the night He was betrayed. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul discusses in detail the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

> *"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."* 1 Cor. 11:23–26

The Lord's Supper has its roots in the **Passover feast** of the Old Testament. It was the Passover meal that Christ shared with His disciples the night He was betrayed. The Passover looked ahead to what Christ would do; the Lord's Supper looks back to what Christ did do. We are to observe the Lord's Supper "in remembrance" of what Christ did for us on the cross of Calvary.



The Last Supper by Gustave Doré

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." *I Cor. 11:26*

One of the reasons the Lord's Supper (and baptism as well) is considered to be an ordinance is that it was practiced in the early church (as well as being explicitly commanded by Christ.)

> *"And upon the first day of the week, . . . the disciples came together to break bread."* Acts 20:7
>
> *"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. . . . For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."* 1 Cor. 11:2, 26

2. **Participants** in the Lord's Supper

   a. Open communion

   This view teaches that all who have accepted Christ as Savior may participate since it is the Lord's Supper.

   b. Closed communion

   This view teaches that since the disciples were a "localized" group of believers at the Last Supper only the membership of a particular church or a church "of like faith" may participate.

3. **Frequency** of the Lord's Supper

   a. It was observed daily in Jerusalem after Pentecost because they had to have many house-services to take care of the crowds.

   > *"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."* Acts 2:46

   b. It was observed weekly later in the book of Acts.

   > *"And upon the first day of the week, . . . the disciples came together to break bread."* Acts 20:7

   c. Its observance is more important than its frequency.

   > *"as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup"* 1 Cor. 11:26

   In a recent poll it was discovered that the average Bible-believing church observes the Lord's Supper quarterly.

4. **Elements** of the Lord's Supper

   Christ was not partaking of his own flesh when He said, "This is my body," but rather the elements (bread and juice) are a symbolic representation of His broken body and shed blood.

   a. Unleavened bread

   During the Passover, all leaven was required to be removed from the Jewish house.

   > *"Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."* Exod. 12:15

This was done because leaven was often a symbol of sin in the Bible.

> *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."* 1 Cor. 5:7–8

To be an accurate picture of Christ's sinlessness, the bread must be without leaven.

> *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* 1 Pet. 1:18–19

> *"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."* 1 Pet. 2:21–22

b. The cup or fruit of the vine

The gospel writers describe the drink at the Last Supper as the "fruit of the vine" (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18).

5. Practical principles concerning the Lord's Supper

> *"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."* 1 Cor. 11:27–28

Some have taken the phrase "unworthily" to an unfortunate extreme. In reality no Christian is worthy to partake of the Lord's Supper. The expression has reference to the problems of sin in the Corinthian church. The Christian is to examine himself of any sins that are unconfessed, and he is to confess and forsake them. Then he is ***commanded*** to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of all that Christ has done for him.

CHAPTER 8

THIRTY NINE
LAW
HISTORY
OLD TESTAMENT
POETRY
BOOKS
MAJOR PROPHETS
TWENTY SEVEN
NEW TESTAMENT
EPISTLES AND LETTERS
BOOKS

Angelology

THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

Lesson

38 Who Are the Angels?

The word ***angelology*** is derived from two Greek words meaning "the doctrine of angels." This doctrine covers the origin, nature, ministry, and destiny of angels, both good and evil.

A. Definition of *angel*

The word *angel* means **"messenger."** It is also used in the Bible in reference to a prophet (Hag. 1:13) or a priest (Matt. 2:7). The context usually indicates whether the "angel" is earthly or heavenly. Angels are also referred to by other titles:

1. Sons of God (Job 1:6; 2:1)
2. Holy ones (Ps. 89:5; Dan. 4:13)
3. Heavenly hosts (Luke 2:13)
4. Host (1 Sam. 1:11; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 148:2)
5. Heavenly beings (Ps. 29:1; 89:6)

B. Biblical description of angels

1. Angels are **always referred to in the masculine gender.**

A sexual distinction in the human sense is never ascribed to angels, however (e.g., they do not marry—Matt. 22:30).

2. Angels are **regularly described in large numbers.**

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." Ps. 68:17

"more than twelve legions of angels" Matt. 26:53

"an innumerable company of angels" Heb. 12:22

"the voice of many angels . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" Rev. 5:11

3. Angels are **described as having great speed.**

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:27

"The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him." Matt. 25:31

> *"And there appeared unto him an angel."* Luke 1:11
>
> *"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host."* Luke 2:13

Daniel 9:21 suggests that angels fly, and Ezekiel 1:13–14 indicates that some heavenly creatures "ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." Whatever the method, angels are very able to deliver their messages from the throne of God to mankind.

4. Angels **have great strength but are not omnipotent.**

> *"The angel of the LORD . . . smote . . . an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."* 2 Kings 19:35
>
> *"Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength."* Ps. 103:20
>
> *"Angels . . . are greater in power and might."* 2 Pet. 2:11
>
> *"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil . . . durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."* Jude 9

5. Angels **have great wisdom.**

> *"My lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth."* 2 Sam. 14:20

6. Angels are **described as righteous.**

> *"And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God."* 1 Sam. 29:9

The Bible indicates that Satan was able to lead a rebellion of one third of the heavenly host against God (Rev. 12:3–4). Once they made that decision to rebel, they sealed their destiny forever. They are either with God or against Him.

C. The creation of the angelic host

1. Angels were **part of the original creation.**

> *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."* Col. 1:16
>
> *"The workmanship . . . was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub."* Ezek. 28:13–14

The Bible does not clearly reveal the exact time of the creation of angels, but they were evidently created before the earth.

> *"Where wast thou [Job] when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"* Job 38:4–7

The phrase "sons of God" is used elsewhere in Job in reference to the angels (Job 1:6; 2:1). Therefore, these angels must have been created before Genesis 1:10 in order to shout as God laid the foundations of the earth.

2. Angels are **created spirits.**

> *"Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire."* Ps. 104:4
>
> *"Are they not all ministering spirits?"* Heb. 1:14
>
> *"A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."* Luke 24:39

The angels may have a celestial-type body comparable to what each Christian will receive at the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:39–40). Fallen angels seem to be disembodied spirits, since they desire to have some type of body through which to function, even if it is the body of a pig (Matt. 12:43–45; Mark 5:12).

D. The classification of the angelic host

1. Angels

Their name is the key to their ministry; they are ***messengers.*** They are seen in Scripture as servants of God, willing at a moment's notice to do His bidding. Not only are they interested in their service for God, but they are also interested in the Christian's service for Him (Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12).

Often angels appear on earth in the guise of men (Josh. 5:13; Judg. 6:21–22; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10). Because of this "human" appearance, the writer of Hebrews warns, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2).

Angels were present at Creation (Job 38:7), at the giving of the Law (Gal. 3:19), at the birth of Christ (Luke 2:13), at His temptation (Matt. 4:11), at His resurrection (Matt. 28:2), and at His ascension (Acts 1:10). They will accompany Christ at His second coming (Matt. 13:37–39; Mark 8:38; 2 Thess. 1:7).

2. Cherubim

> *"So he [God] drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims."* Gen. 3:24
>
> *"And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat."* Exod. 25:18

These heavenly creatures are a specific type of angel that is closely related to God's throne. They are always associated with the *vindication of God's holiness.* These creatures are described in Ezekiel 1 and 10 as having wings. It is also interesting to note that Satan is described as "the anointed cherub" in Ezekiel 28:14.

3. Seraphim

> *"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face,*

> *and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the* L*ORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."* Isa. 6:1–3

Since seraphim are mentioned only once in Scripture, it is impossible to develop a clear picture of their purpose. Their name means "burning ones" and may symbolize their holiness. They seem to be the instruments of unceasing worship of a Holy God. They are also described as having wings.

> *"And the four beasts [living creatures] had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."* Rev. 4:8

The Greek word translated *beast* in Revelation 4:8 is not the same word for the grotesque beasts mentioned later in Revelation 13. "Living creature" gives a better idea of who these creatures are. They are probably seraphim, since their unceasing activity is centered around the fullness of divine life. Seraphim are one of the great mysteries we will not fully understand until we get to Heaven.

E. The ministry of the angelic host

There are over 270 references to angels in the Bible, and in almost every case their mention is closely associated with their ministry. Much of their ministry we may never know, but we can rest in the assurance that they are indeed real and present in this world. May God "open [our] eyes . . . [to] behold, the mountain . . . full of horses and chariots" (2 Kings 6:17).

1. They have a ministry **to God.**
   - **a.** They worship God. (Ps. 148:1–2; Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8)
   - **b.** They are in awe of God's activities. (1 Tim. 3:16)
   - **c.** Their ministry to man is that which pleases God and is first and foremost a ministry to Him.

     > *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"* Heb. 1:14
2. They have a ministry **to man.**
   - **a.** As messengers
     - **(1)** They announced the birth of John the Baptist. (Luke 1:13)
     - **(2)** They announced the birth of Jesus to Mary. (Luke 1:34–35)
     - **(3)** They announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. (Luke 2:10–14)
     - **(4)** They announced the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Luke 24:4–7)
     - **(5)** They announced the second coming of Jesus Christ. (Acts 1:10–11)

b. As guardians

Most of us have heard the term "guardian angel," and the idea has Scriptural justification.

> *"The angel of the* L*ORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."* Ps. 34:7
>
> *"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."* Matt. 18:10

Following is a list of those who experienced the protection of angels:

(1) Jacob (Gen. 32:24–32)

(2) Israel (Exod. 14:19)

(3) Joshua (Josh. 5:14)

(4) Elisha (2 Kings 6:17)

(5) Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 22:9–12)

(6) The psalmist (Ps. 91:11)

(7) The three Hebrew children (Dan. 3:28)

(8) Daniel (Dan. 6:22)

Christ indicated at the time He was betrayed that if He desired, He could call "more than twelve legions of angels" to His defense.

c. As spectators

(1) Of the joy over repentant sinners (Luke 5:10)

(2) Of Christ's confession before God on behalf of sinners (Luke 12:8–9)

(3) Of the eternal woes of those who worship the beast (Rev. 14:10–11)

d. As guides

(1) They guided Abraham's servant. (Gen. 24:7, 40)

(2) They guided Jacob. (Gen. 28:12–15)

(3) They guided Israel. (Exod. 14:19)

(4) They guided Moses. (Acts 7:38, 53)

(5) They guided Paul. (Gal. 3:19)

(6) They guided Cornelius. (Acts 10:3–5)

(7) They guided Philip. (Acts 8:26–40)

e. As ministers to the needs of Christians

The Bible never records an angel's ministering to an unbeliever. This would be consistent with what we know about angels from Hebrews 1:14. They are to minister to those who are heirs of salvation.

(1) They ministered to Hagar and Ishmael. (Gen. 21:17–21)

(2) They ministered to the Israelites. (Exod. 3:7)

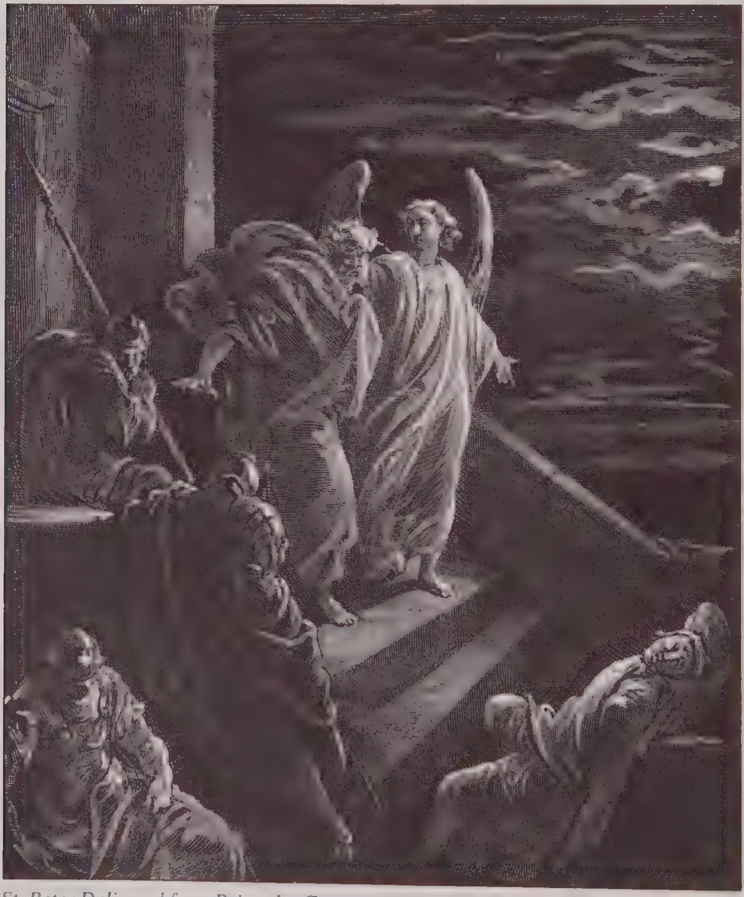
(3) They ministered to Elijah. (1 Kings 19:5–7)

Even when Elijah was out of God's will for his life, an angel met his physical needs of food and rest. It must have been a high-quality food that the angel prepared for Elijah, since Elijah was able to travel for forty days on that one meal.

(4) They ministered to Jesus. (Mark 1:13)

(5) They ministered to Peter. (Acts 12:6–11)

Only Heaven will reveal the multitudes of instances that angels protected or assisted us in our earthly walk.



St. Peter Delivered from Prison by Gustave Doré

"And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands." *Acts 12.*

Lesson

39 Names and Titles of Specific Angels

Although the names of most angels in the Bible are unknown, occasionally Scripture refers to particular angels by name or by a special ministry that they performed for the Lord.

A. Lucifer

> *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"* Isa. 14:12

In the context of this passage it is evident that this must refer to Satan. As one of the created heavenly creatures, he rebelled against God. The name *Lucifer* means "the bright one"; Satan is called "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). His description is similar to that of Christ (Light of the world) in John 8:12. Even in this title we see Satan's character as the great counterfeiter. (Lucifer, or Satan, will be discussed in detail in lesson 40.)

B. Michael

> *"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."* Jude 9

The name *Michael* means "one who is like God." Michael is the only angel designated as an "archangel." It has been suggested that Satan (before his fall) and Gabriel were, and are, archangels. But the Bible never states that. The devil is referred to as a "cherub" (Ezek. 28:14), not an archangel.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 reveals that the rapture of the church will be accompanied by "the voice of *the* archangel" which seems to indicate there is only one. That "one" must, therefore, be Michael.

Although Michael has great authority, he is still in subjection to God (Jude 9). Along with his authority he has been given great power to back it up. In Revelation 12:7–12 he battles the devil and his angels. In Daniel 12:1 he is seen as the special protector of the nation of Israel. In Jude 9 he contends with the devil for the body of Moses.

C. Gabriel

> *"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."* Luke 1:26–27

The angel Gabriel is often associated with special announcements that God wants to make to the world. Gabriel announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias (Luke 1:11–19) and the birth of Christ to Mary

(Luke 1:26–38). Since he announces spectacular events, it has been suggested that perhaps he will be the one who blows the trumpet at the rapture, although the Bible does not reveal this.

In the Old Testament, Gabriel was the revealer of God's divine purpose. These announcements were often clouded in mystery. An amazing prophecy in Daniel 8:15–27 was revealed to Daniel by the angel Gabriel. It was fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes' persecution of the Jews in 171–165 B.C. and in the deliverance of the Jews by Judas Maccabeus.

In Daniel 9:20–27, Gabriel delivers to Daniel the amazing passage of the Seventy Weeks, prophecies dealing with the first and second coming of Christ.

D. The Angel of the Lord

1. Activities of the Angel of the Lord

Although the phrase "Angel of the Lord" could refer to any good angel (Matt. 2:19), it is often used of a particular being with special abilities and infinite knowledge.

a. The Angel of the Lord encouraged Hagar. (Gen.16:7; 21:17)

b. The Angel of the Lord stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac. (Gen. 22:11)

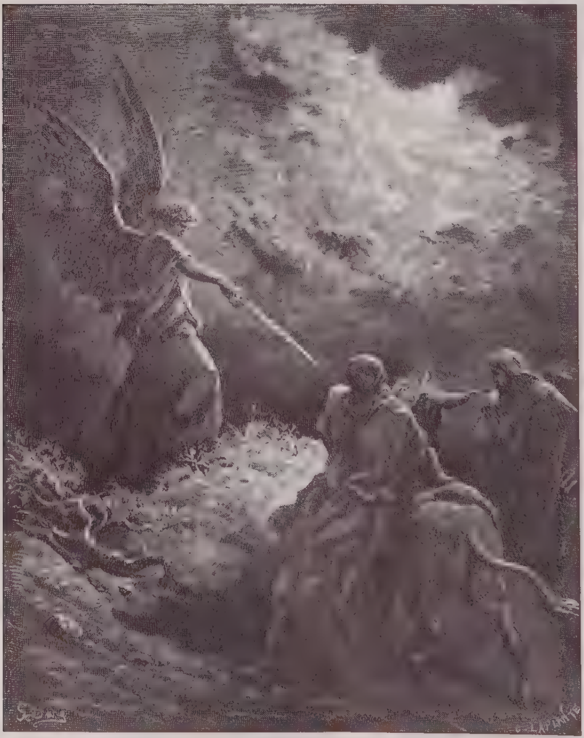
c. The Angel of the Lord promised Abraham many descendants. (Gen. 22:15–18)

d. The Angel of the Lord was the spokesman of the "three men" who appeared to Abraham. (Gen. 18:1–22)

e. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob. (Gen. 31:11–13)

f. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush. (Exod. 3:6)

g. The Angel of the Lord blocked the road for Balaam. (Num. 22:22)



The Angel Appearing to Baalam by Gustave Doré

2. Identification of the Angel of the Lord

Is the Angel of the Lord a Theophany (a preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ)? For the following reasons it is believed that the Angel of the Lord **is** a Theophany.

a. The Angel of the Lord is occasionally designated as Deity.

"And an angel of the LORD . . . said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you." Judg. 2:1

"I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt." Exod. 20:2

"Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant." Deut. 7:9

b. This Angel has the prerogative of forgiveness of sin.

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him." Exod. 23:20–21

c. This Angel did not discourage Balaam's worship.

"Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face." Num. 22:31

(1) Man cannot accept worship.

"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man." Acts 10:25, 26

(2) Angels cannot accept worship.

"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant . . . worship God." Rev. 22:8–9

(3) Only Christ can accept worship.

"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him [Christ], saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Matt. 14:33

Based on the above information it must be concluded that the angel in Numbers 22:31 is **deity.**

d. This Angel's actions are considered God's actions in Zechariah.

(1) The Angel is addressed and the Lord responds.

"And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? . . . And the LORD shewed me four carpenters." Zech. 1:19–20

(2) The work of the Lord is ascribed to this Angel.

"And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited . . . For I, saith the LORD, *will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."* Zech. 2:3–5

(3) The Angel performs works that can only be those of God.

"The LORD *rebuke thee, O Satan."* Zech. 3:2

"I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." Zech. 3:4

"If thou wilt walk in my ways . . . then thou shalt also judge my house." Zech. 3:7

THE JUDICIAL NATURE OF CHRIST

That this Angel, as the second Person of the Deity, exercises judgment bothers some individuals. They cannot conceive of the loving Savior doing anything judicial. However, this should not be a problem to one who fully understands God's character as revealed in His Word. God is love, but He is also holy. He cannot let sin go on unpunished. We should never be guilty of overemphasizing the love of God to the exclusion of His justice and holiness. Others have suggested that the God of the Old Testament is a "dirty bully." The problem is not with God but with the human mind that cannot accept God's justice. These same individuals also cannot understand "a loving God sending someone to Hell." However, the Bible does picture Jesus Christ as a judge.

In the 1 Chronicles passage, the angel of the Lord was sent to Jerusalem to destroy it. But Deity has often had to do just that. God destroyed the entire world by a flood in Noah's day. He personally killed the firstborn in Egypt (Exod. 12:12). He sent down fire from Heaven to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. God smote Uzzah because he disobeyed His commandment by touching the ark of the covenant. God killed Ananias and Sapphira because they lied to the Holy Spirit. God is a righteous judge.

Jesus Christ is also very active in judgment. John 5:22 states that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (Matt. 25:32; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10; 2 Tim. 4:1). It is clear that Jesus Christ, the loving Savior, is also the primary judge of this world's sin. When Jesus returns to earth at the end of the Tribulation, His activity will be judicial.

> *"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."* Rev. 19:11–15

e. This Angel exercised the Divine prerogative of judgment.

> *"And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the* LORD *beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the* LORD *stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite."* 1 Chron. 21:15

> *"Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the* LORD *chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the* LORD *persecute them."* Ps. 35:5–6

> *"The angel of the* LORD *went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: . . . they were all dead corpses."* 2 Kings 19:35

It is not inconsistent to suggest that the Angel of the Lord may be a reference to Jesus. This would be a preincarnate appearance of Christ in the Old Testament.

It is also interesting to note that these appearances occurred at key times in the world's history. The angel of the Lord appeared at the founding of God's chosen race in Abraham, the deliverance of that race from Egypt, the conquering of the Promised Land, the laying of the foundation of Solomon's temple, and the protecting of His children in the Babylonian captivity.

E. Other specifically designated angels

1. Angels of the judgment (Gen. 19:13; 2 Sam. 24:16; Ps. 78:49)
2. The "watcher" (Dan. 4:13, 23)
3. The angel of the abyss (Rev. 9:11)
4. The angel "which had power over fire" (Rev. 14:18)
5. Angel of the waters (Rev. 16:5)
6. Seven angels of judgment (Rev. 8:2)
7. The angel "having the key of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 20:1–3)

   This angel may be Michael since he is the only angel who is ever recorded as fighting against Satan, but in this passage his name is not mentioned.
8. A strong angel (Rev. 5:2)
9. A mighty angel (Rev. 10:1)
10. An angel "having great power" (Rev. 18:1)

Lesson

40 Satan: The Angel of Light

The Bible clearly teaches that Satan is the greatest enemy of both God and man. In any battle, it is of the utmost importance that we understand our enemy and his wiles. To understand our great enemy, we must search the Scriptures to see what God says about him.

A. The existence of Satan

1. It is proved in the **Old Testament.**

   Satan's existence is specifically taught in seven Old Testament books (Genesis, 1 Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah).

   Without the definite article (the), the word designated for Satan means "an adversary" (1 Sam. 29:4; 1 Kings 11:14, 23, 25; Ps. 109:6). With the definite article, it is the proper name for Satan (Job 1–2; 1 Chron. 21:1).

   The Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) translates the word *diabolus* as Satan.

2. It is proved in the **New Testament.**

   The word *Satan* occurs thirty-seven times in the New Testament. These Scripture references use the definite article in reference to Satan, indicating a **personal** Devil.

   Jesus taught the existence of Satan (Matt. 13:39; Luke 10:18; Luke 11:18; John 8:44).

B. The origin of Satan (Read Isa. 14:12–15; Ezek. 28:12–18.)

1. Satan was part of the **original creation.**

   The two key Scripture passages on the origin of Satan are Isaiah 14:12–14 and Ezekiel 28:12–18. In Isaiah 14 we learn of the desire of Satan (Lucifer) to be like God. In Ezekiel 28 his original position and his sin are described. Although Ezekiel 28 refers to the king of Tyre, it is clear from the context that one who supersedes the king of Tyre is also being described. That one can only be Satan. Since God created everything, He must have created Satan.

2. He had a position of **prestige in creation.**

   Satan's original name, *Lucifer,* means "the bright one," or "the shining one." In Ezekiel 28:13–18 Satan is described as having a beautiful jeweled covering. This speaks of the glory of God in His creation. God also describes his "beauty" and "wisdom" in verse 17 of the same chapter. The phrase "sealest up the sum" (Ezek. 28:12) may indicate that he had a position of rule in Heaven.

3. He was part of the **order of cherubim.**

> *"Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth."* Ezek. 28:14
>
> Note: It is ironic that he who is so **unholy** now was once a cherub, a defender of the **holiness** of God (Gen. 3:24; Exod. 25:18).

4. He was **perfect in his creation.**

> *"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."* Ezek. 28:15

How was he perfect? How could God create Satan knowing that he would sin? Could God have created him without the ability to sin? Yes, God could have created Satan without a free choice. But that is not God's way, neither with Satan and the angelic host nor with man. God wants man and angels to love Him by choice, not by force.

The word *perfect* means "all that God intended for one to be." God allowed Satan a choice. Sin was "found" in Satan (Ezek. 28:15); it was not placed there by God.

> *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."* James 1:13

C. The sin of Satan

> *"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."* Ezek. 28:15

Although we know very little concerning the circumstances of Satan's original sin, Christ gave us an insight into the iniquity that was found in Satan:

> *"He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."* John 8:44

Satan, the father of lies, originated in his heart **the first lie in the universe:** that he could be like God.

> *"For thou [Satan] hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High."* Isa. 14:13–14

Satan then believed his own lie that he could be like God, thus exhibiting an attitude of pride. (Pride is believing something untrue about oneself.) After telling himself that he could be like God, he then turned his false thinking into the action of rebelling against God. One third of the heavenly host (Rev. 12:4) also believed Satan's lie, and they joined in Satan's rebellion. Because of this, Heaven could no longer be their dwelling place. God cast Satan and his followers out of Heaven.

> *"I [Christ] beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."* Luke 10:18
>
> *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"* Isa. 14:12

Evidently Satan was cast on earth ("the ground"). When God in Job asked Satan where he had been, he replied:

> *"Going to and fro in the earth, and . . . walking up and down in it."* Job 1:7

Jesus referred to Satan as "the prince of this world" (John 14:30; 16:11), and Paul called him "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4); that is, of this present world-system with its violence, greed, rebellion, and deception.

Satan's career in man's history began when he entered into the serpent. Genesis 3:1 describes the serpent as being very subtle, or able with a slight turn of a phrase to change truth into a lie. Satan spoke to Eve the first lie on earth:

> *"Ye shall not surely die . . . ye shall be as gods."* Gen. 3:4–5

Eve, like Satan and his angelic followers, believed Satan's lie and was lifted up with pride and rebellion.

Satan's methods have never changed. His progression of sin is always the same:

1. Belief in a lie
2. Pride
3. Rebellion

Satan still lies to people today and tries to turn them away from the truth.

> "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled [deceived, tricked] Eve through his subtilty [deceit], so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
> *2 Cor. 11:3*

No one rebels against God today until he first believes a lie. Some common verbal traps that young people fall for are:

"Everybody's doing it!"
"If it feels good, do it!"
"Life is so unfair!"
"I know as much as my parents do!"
"Those values are old-fashioned!"
"I am more beautiful than most!"
"I am more talented than others!"

Once a person believes a lie about himself, he will become proud and then in time will rebel against God and the authority instituted by God.

Unlike the external temptation which Adam and Eve faced, Satan's lie arose from within him. His doom is certain. It is interesting to note that, whereas God took away Satan's glory and beauty, He did not take away his power. Today God allows him to be the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) and the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). He is allowed access to God in order to obtain permission to try God's people (Job 1:6–12), but he no longer may abide in Heaven. One might say that he can go to the "office" of Heaven to speak with God, but Heaven is not his home. One day, God will withhold Satan's "office privileges," and will permanently cast him out of Heaven (Rev. 12:9; Isa. 14:15). The defeat of this powerful enemy in the end times will bring great glory to God.

The Five "I Wills" of Satan
(Isa. 14:13–14)

1. **"I will ascend into heaven."**

   Each of Satan's five statements is a different aspect of the same sin. Pride (believing a lie about oneself) is always at the center of his sin against God. It is seen in all of his statements as striving to be equal with God. The word *heaven* as used here is the place of God's abode and jurisdiction.

2. **"I will exalt my throne above the stars of God."**

   God has given to Satan temporary power (Rev. 2:13), but he has never been satisfied with that. Satan wants men and angels to worship **him** instead of worshiping God. The more a Christian seeks his own glory, the more he resembles the Devil. The "stars" of the Bible often refer to angels (Job 38:7; Jude 13; Rev. 12:3–4; 22:16).

3. **"I will sit *also* upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north."**

   Satan's great desire is to share ("also") in the rule of the universe. The phrases "mount of the congregation" and "sides of the north" refer to God's throne.

   > *"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."*
   >
   > Ps. 48:1–2

4. **"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds."**

   In the Bible, clouds are symbolic of the divine presence (Exod. 16:10; 40:38; 1 Kings 8:10; Acts 1:9; 1 Thess. 2:4; and Rev. 1:7). Satan wanted to be greater than God Himself.

5. **"I will be like the most High."**

   This seems to be Satan's main objective. He wants to be coequal with God. He wants a position reserved for God alone. His suggestion to Eve in the Garden of Eden was that she could become a "god." That in reality has always been Satan's desire. He has never changed, and his destiny is certain. From the lesson of Satan's fall, one can gain a new appreciation for the seriousness of the sin of pride.

   > *"Lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil."* 1 Tim. 3:6

As "the accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10), Satan's life today is spent encouraging others to believe his lies. He has no ultimate power over believers, however, because Jesus intercedes with the Father for His own (Luke 22:31–32; John 17:9–17).

D. The powers of Satan

The doctrine of Satan is ridiculed by those who do not have a good understanding of the Bible. He is often pictured in a red suit, smelling of brimstone, and holding a pitchfork in his hand. This is contrary to the Biblical picture of him. In the Garden of Eden he is the subtle serpent. In 2 Corinthians 11:14 he is called an "angel of light." He is the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) and the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). In the Scriptures his titles are many and his powers are great.

1. Satan is **able to work miracles.**

The unsaved world is often duped into following Satan because he can work many signs and wonders. Pharaoh's magicians were able to duplicate some of God's plagues upon Egypt. Satan's two "beasts" will be able to work many miracles during the Tribulation (Rev. 13:3–4, 12–15).

2. He is **able to blind** the eyes of the ungodly.

> *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."* 2 Cor. 4:4

If you have ever tried to present the Christian view of an issue to an unbeliever, you know how frustrating it can be. You feel like you're not even talking on the same plane. His mind has been so affected by Satan that you wonder how he can believe the things he does. You begin to realize the truth of Proverbs 1:7—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

3. He is very **subtle.**

One of Satan's most dangerous powers is his subtlety (Gen. 3:1). He can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:4). He has many "wiles" (Eph. 6:11). He comes to man in the guise of spirituality. At the temptation of Christ Satan "fain would help Christ's faith, stimulate His confidence in the divine power, and furnish an incentive to worship." (William Evans)

His subtlety is seen in his tempting man when he is weak. Christ had just been fasting for forty days when Satan tempted Him to turn stones into bread. He also subtly attacks a man after a great success (I Kings 18–19).

> *"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."* Eph. 6:11
>
> *"Be sober, be vigilant."* 1 Pet. 5:8

4. He is **powerful** but not omnipotent.

   The power that Satan has now is by God's permission. In the first two chapters of Job, God **allowed** Satan to test Job. That gives to each Christian the confidence that nothing will come into his life except by the permission of the Lord. This is again seen as the Holy Spirit led Christ into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (Matt. 4:1). He is allowed by God to be the prince of the power of the air; therefore, even the demons must ask the Lord's permission before they can do anything (Mark 5:12).

   The fact that Satan is not omnipotent is seen in Jude 9 when Michael says: "The Lord rebuke thee." His final doom shows his lack of omnipotence as he is first cast into "the bottomless pit" (Rev. 20:3) and one thousand years later "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" (Rev. 20:10).

5. He is **intelligent** but not omniscient.

   Satan does not realize the futility of his schemes. He may be "subtle" (Gen. 3:1), but he did not understand Christ's ability to overcome his temptations. Luke 22:3 states that Satan entered "into Judas," but verse 22 reveals that "truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined." God knew that Calvary was necessary, but the Devil seems unaware of the full consequences of the crucifixion of Christ.

   It appears that Satan cannot read the minds of Christians. He cannot indwell the saint of God. Satan can **oppress** the Christian from without, but he cannot **possess** a Christian from within.

   > *"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."* 1 John 4:4

   Neither can Satan predict the future. Although God may allow him to control some current events and occasionally be able to "fulfill" what one of his followers has "predicted," most of his "predictions" are not fulfilled, because Satan is not omniscient.

6. He is **influential** but not omnipresent.

   > *"And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."* Job 1:7

   Satan may influence many, but he can be in only one place at a time.

   > *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."* 1 Pet. 5:8

Satan's future doom will involve two separate places of confinement.

> *"And . . . an angel. . . . Laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up.* Rev. 20:1–3
>
> *"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."* Rev. 20:10

E. The character of Satan

1. He is the **adversary.**

An adversary is one who takes a position against another. From the opening pages of Scripture, Satan is seen as the one who is set against everything that is righteous, good, and holy. He is the archenemy of God and His children. To stand with Satan and his philosophy is to stand against God.

> *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."* 1 Pet. 5:8

2. He is the **accuser.**

> *"Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face."* Job 1:9–11
>
> *"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."* Rev. 12:10

Evidently anything that Satan does today is by the permission of God. As the "accuser of the brethren," he mocks everything that is holy and just. He ridicules the spiritual Christian before God day and night. Once allowed by God to tempt an individual, he will try everything at his disposal to make the holy unholy.

But we have the confidence that "greater is he that is in you [God], than he that is in the world [Satan]" (1 John 4:4). God will never allow us to be tempted by Satan to an unbearable degree.

> *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* 1 Cor. 10:13

3. He is the **tempter.**

Of all Satan's character traits this one word describes him in his primary occupation. He is continually tempting men to follow his evil ways.

BIBLICAL TITLES OF SATAN

Abaddon, Apollyon (Rev. 9:11) both mean "the destroyer."

Lucifer (Isa. 14:12) means "day-star," "bright one," or "shining one."

Devil (Rev. 12:10) means "accuser."

Dragon (Rev. 12:9) indicates his power.

"The accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10)

"The adversary" (1 Pet. 5:8)

Beelzebub (Matt. 12:24) means "lord of flies."

Belial (2 Cor. 6:15) means "worthlessness" in Old Testament; "Satan" in New Testament.

The deceiver of "the whole world" (Rev. 12:9)

"An enemy" (Matt. 13:28)

"The wicked one" (Matt. 13:19)

"The father of lies" (John 8:44)

"A murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44)

"The prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2)

"Prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)

"That old serpent" (Rev. 12:9)

"The tempter" (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5)

> *"And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."* Matt. 4:3

It is important to understand how Satan tempts us so that we can be prepared to defend ourselves (in God's power) against him. From 1 John 2:16 we learn that the Devil has three primary methods of temptation:

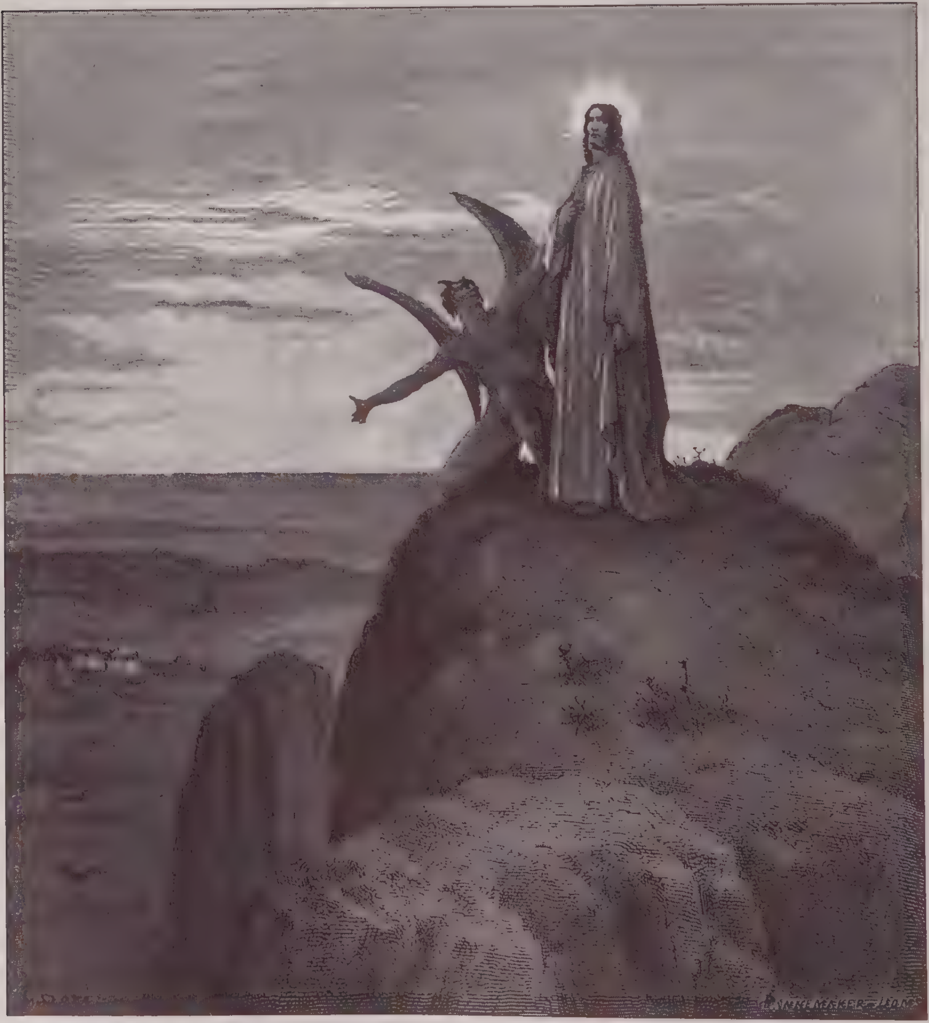
> *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."* 1 John 2:16

Each one of these temptations arises out of an area of God-given desire but is then taken beyond the limit of Scripture. Satan used these three areas of temptation with Eve as well as with Jesus Christ. Christ's glorious victory over the Devil's temptations gives us confidence that we, too, can overcome his temptation. By submitting to the Holy Spirit and using the Word of God, we can overcome the temptations of the Tempter. We need not fear what he can do to us. Our confidence is in the One who soundly defeated the Devil.

> *"And fear not them [followers of Satan] which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him [God] which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* Matt. 10:28
>
> *"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."* 1 John 4:4

THREE AREAS OF TEMPTATION

AREA	TEMPTATION OF EVE	TEMPTATION OF CHRIST
Lust of the flesh	"Eat the fruit."	"Turn stones to bread."
Lust of the eyes	"Your eyes shall be opened."	"All the kingdoms will be yours."
Pride of life	"Ye shall be as gods."	"God won't let you die."



The Temptation of Jesus by Gustave Doré

"All this power will I give thee, and all the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine." *Luke 4:6*

Lesson

41 The Present and Future Position of Satan

A. Satan's present position

1. He has a position of **great power.**
   - a. Over the world (Matt. 12:26; John 12:31; Eph. 2:2)
   - b. Over his fallen angels (Matt. 25:41; Eph. 6:12; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:7)

2. He is the possessor of a **great kingdom.**

   In Matthew 12:26 Christ refers to the kingdom of Satan. In the temptation of Christ in the wilderness Satan offered Christ the kingdoms of the world if Christ would bow down and worship him. Did Satan have the right to make such an offer? Evidently he did. Christ never disputed Satan's claim. God had given to Satan temporary rule over this world, and Satan offered that rule to Christ. Jesus Christ rightfully refused the offer, for He knew that someday He would receive His kingdom, but it would come in God's time and in God's way. Christ knew that first there must be Calvary, then the kingdom. This should be a lesson to those who are impatient concerning God's will and His perfect timing. God's way and timing are always best. There can be no "short cuts" to long-term spirituality.

3. He is the perpetrator of **much wickedness.**
   - a. Satan is involved in tireless activity.

     "Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, [I have come] From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Job 1:7

     "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. 5:8

   - b. He is in a continual conflict with God.

     "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Gen. 3:15

   - c. He is involved in continual temptation.
     - (1) He capitalizes on man's weaknesses.

       "Defraud ye not one the other, . . . that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." 1 Cor. 7:5

     - (2) He believes the end justifies the means.

       "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:5

     - (3) He is subtle in his temptation.

       "Now the serpent was more subtil." Gen. 3:1

       "lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" 1 Tim. 3:7

> *"And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."* 2 Tim. 2:26
>
> *"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."* 2 Cor. 11:14

d. He is the great counterfeiter.

> *"But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."* Matt. 13:25, 38–39

As tares and wheat are similar in appearance until the harvest, so some unsaved people may appear to be saved when they really are not.

B. Satan's future position

1. Christ has defeated Satan in the past.

a. At Christ's temptation (Matt. 4:1-11)

Jesus Christ soundly defeated Satan at His temptation. Although Christ could have defeated Satan with divine power, that was not His purpose. Jesus wanted to be an example to all mankind in His defeat of the Devil. He overcame outward temptation by submitting Himself to God the Father and resisting the Devil (James 4:7), which is the way that each Christian must also resist temptation. Three times during the temptation Christ quoted from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy.

Matt. 4:4—Deut. 8:3
Matt. 4:7—Deut. 6:16
Matt. 4:10—Deut. 6:13; 10:20

Christ is our example of obtaining victory over sin and Satan.

> *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."* Ps. 119:11

b. At Christ's crucifixion

In the Garden of Eden, God promised mankind that Satan would be ultimately defeated.

> *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Gen. 3:15

The Devil is a defeated foe. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross spelled defeat for the forces of Satan.

> *"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."* John 12:31–33
>
> *"And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."* John 16:8, 11

Because of Christ's victory, the Christian can experience victory over sin and Satan.

Saved from the **penalty** of sin in the **past**
Saved from the **power** of sin in the **present**
Saved from the **presence** of sin in the **future**

> *"And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb."* Rev. 12:11
>
> *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."* Eph. 6:10–13

2. Christ will defeat Satan in the future.

Satan's future doom, prophesied in Genesis 3:15, is described in Isaiah 14, Revelation 12, and Revelation 20. The Scriptures record his final demise in two stages, at the end of the Tribulation and at the end of the Millennium.

a. Satan in the **Tribulation**

The seven years of the Tribulation will show to the world what Satan is really like. His power then will appear at times to be limitless. But God is still in control.

Satan's attempts against God during the Tribulation are recorded prophetically in Isaiah 14 and Revelation 12. Isaiah uses the **prophetic** past tense, which is common to all the writings of the Major and Minor Prophets (e.g., Isaiah 53 records the Crucifixion in the past tense, although it did not occur until 500 years later).

Halfway through the Tribulation, Satan will realize "that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:12–14). He knows that his territory on earth will soon be invaded by the return of Christ to earth and Christ's setting up His millennial kingdom. Satan not only wants to share in Christ's reign on earth; he also wants to take over God's throne in Heaven. In his fury, Satan again utters the five "I wills" of Isaiah 14:12–17. He reasons that the best defense against the return of Christ is an offense against Heaven.

> *"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven."* Rev. 12:7–8

In the midst of the Tribulation period, Satan no longer has any access to God to tempt God's people. Therefore God casts Satan from His presence, an event observed by John in Revelation 9:1.

Satan is furious. He has failed in one of his last attempts against God. There is joy in Heaven, but earth will now receive judgment at the hands of Satan.

> *"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."* Rev. 12:12

> *"They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?"* Isa. 14:16–17

For the last half of the Tribulation, Satan unmercifully persecutes the nation of Israel through the Antichrist and the False Prophet. Israel must flee for her life into the wilderness (Rev. 12:13–16). When all hope seems to be gone, Jesus Christ will return and Satan will be bound for one thousand years.

> *"And he laid hold on . . . Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit."* Rev. 20:2–3

b. Satan in the **Millennium**

According to Revelation 20:1–3, Satan will be bound during the Millennium. There will be peace on earth during this time, because Christ will rule with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15). At the end of the one-thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will be loosed for a short season.

> *"And cast him [Satan] into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."* Rev. 20:3

> *"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."* Rev. 20:7–8

Why Must Satan Be Loosed?

1. To show that a perfect environment like the Millennium will not change a man's sinful heart.
2. To show sinful man that he is without excuse even in the Millennium when Christ is on earth visibly.
3. To show to the millennial population the power of the Adamic nature in the unregenerate man.

4. To show the unconverted man's basic aversion to the rule of a righteous God.
5. To show that the unconverted man will reject the God he can see during the Millennium just as easily as he rejects a God he cannot see at the present time.

The ability of Satan to gather an innumerable host of unregenerate men for one last battle against God teaches an important lesson: the **power of the sinful flesh.** Temptation comes from three sources: the world (1 John 2:15–16), the flesh (Rom. 7:18), and the Devil (1 Pet. 5:8). During the Millennium, only one source of temptation will be effective.

(1) The **world** is powerless to tempt because Christ will rule with a rod of iron.

(2) The **Devil** will be bound during the Millennium.

(3) The **flesh** will be the only source of temptation left.

Yet the sinful flesh of man will be sufficient to cause an innumerable host to inwardly rebel during the Millennium and finally to outwardly rebel when Satan is loosed. This millennial lesson on temptation should help us to never take lightly the power of our sinful flesh.

> *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."* James 1:14

c. Satan throughout all eternity.

> *"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."* Rev. 20:9–10

After a very short battle, Satan is cast into the place that was predetermined to be his final abode (Matt. 25:41). Satan is cast into the **Lake of Fire** where the Beast (Antichrist) and False Prophet have been for the one thousand years of the Millennium. Revelation 20:10 is the most powerful verse in the Bible to prove the eternality of the Lake of Fire. The Beast and False Prophet have been tormented for one thousand years, and yet they are still being tormented when Satan is cast in. Satan, the Beast, the False Prophet, and all who have been deceived by him will spend eternity separated from God in the Lake of Fire.

Lesson 42

Demons: Fallen Angels

A. Origin of demons

Demon is another name for "fallen angel." Satan is the leader of fallen angels (Rev. 12:7) and the prince of demons (Matt. 12:24).

B. Characteristics of demons

1. Their **names**
   - **a.** Fallen angels (Jude 6–7)
   - **b.** Demons

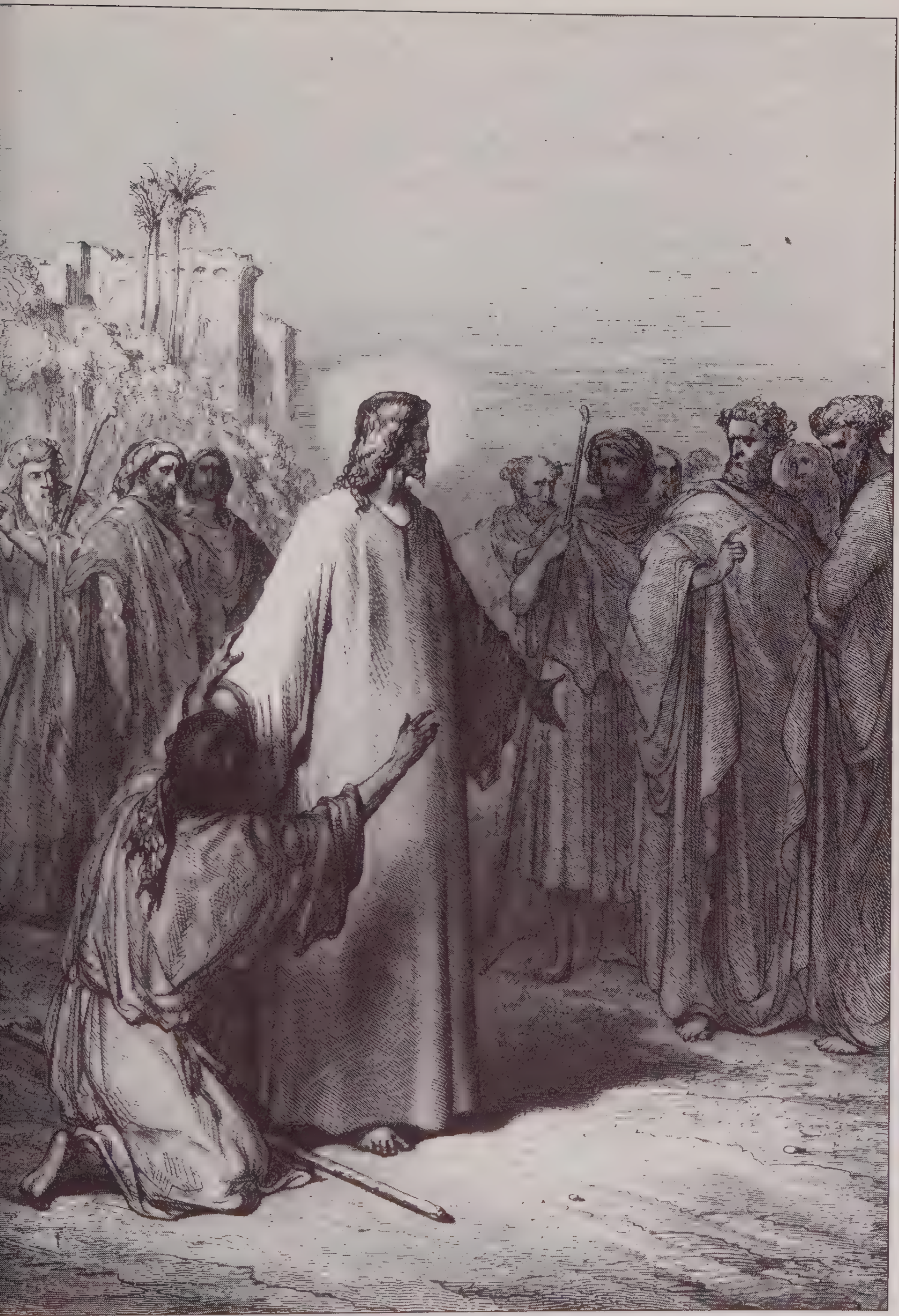
     This word is often translated "spirits" or "unclean spirits" (Luke 11:24).
   - **c.** Devils

     When found in the plural or without the definite article it refers to a group of demons.
2. Their **number**

   Their number is one third of the original host of Heaven (Rev. 12:4). A great host of demons can possess an individual simultaneously (Mark 5:9).
3. Their **nature**
   - **a.** They are spirit beings. (Mark 9:25; Eph. 6:12)
   - **b.** They are intelligent.
     - **(1)** They know who Jesus is. (Mark 1:24)
     - **(2)** They know they deserve torment. (Matt. 8:29)
     - **(3)** They believe in one God. (James 2:19)
4. Their **notoriety**

   Demons were especially active during the life of Christ on earth. They are seldom mentioned in the epistles. As emissaries of Satan, they attempt to hinder God's purposes. In Scripture they are called "wicked" and "unclean." Their own form of doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1–3) leads to immoral conduct in the lives of those who follow it.

   As "spirits" they evidently desire some sort of body (Matt. 12:43–45; Mark. 5:12). When Jesus cast the demons out of the maniac of Gardara, they begged Him to allow them to enter into the swine. Having great physical strength (Luke 8:29), they can inflict physical deformities upon the unsaved (Luke 13:11–17). Most Biblical examples of demon possession occurred during the ministry of Christ on earth.



Jesus Healing the Man Possessed with a Devil **by Gustave Doré**
"And they were all amazed . . . saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out." *Luke 4:36*

C. Cases of demonic activity

1. The Syrophoenician's daughter (Matt. 15:22; Mark 7:25)
2. The maniac of Gadara (Matt. 8:28; Mark 5:2; Luke 8:27)
3. The man from Capernaum (Mark 1:23; Luke 4:31–37)
4. The blind and dumb demoniac (Matt. 12:22–30; Mark 3:22–30; Luke 11:14–23)

D. Characteristics of demonic activity

1. Definition of demon possession

> "Demon possession means a demon residing in a person, exerting direct control and influence over that person, with certain derangement of mind and/or body. Demon possession is to be distinguished from demon influence or demon activity in relation to a person. The work of the demon in the latter is from the outside; in demon possession it is from within. By this definition a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a believer can be the target of demonic activity to such an extent that he may give the appearance of demon possession. . . . Usually there is an outbreak of demon activity when truth and light are the strongest (e.g., time of Christ)."
>
> —*Charles Ryrie, The Ryrie Study Bible,*
> (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), p. 1838.

2. Characteristics of demon possession

- **a.** Demons can cause dumbness. (Matt. 9:32–33)
- **b.** Demons can cause blindness. (Matt. 12:22)
- **c.** Demons are associated with disease, but certainly not all disease is the result of demonic activity.
  - **(1)** Prolonged illness (Luke 13:11)
  - **(2)** Mental anguish (Luke 8:26–35)
  - **(3)** Various physical disorders (Matt. 4:24; 9:32; Mark 9:18; Luke 11:14)
- **d.** Demons give the possessed person great strength. (Mark 5:3)
- **e.** Demons cause the possessed person to act wild. (Mark 5:4)
- **f.** Demons use the vocal cords of the one they possess. (Mark 5:7–9)
- **g.** Demons have names. (Mark 5:9)

3. Past and future course of demonic activity

a. In the past

The main accounts of demon possession occurred during the time of Christ. It is doubtful if such a powerful outpouring of demon possession would be seen today. However, in many animistic cultures (animism is the belief that spirits reside in objects), missionaries have reported occurrences of demon possession. But this should not frighten the Christian because of the promise of 1 John 4:4—

> *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."* 1 John 4:4

b. In the future

According to Scripture the next great outpouring of demon activity will be during the Tribulation (Rev. 9:1–11).

Ultimately all demons will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41). The final abode of the lost was originally prepared for the Devil and his angels. Man goes there only because he rejects Christ's offer of salvation. The demons once had the privilege of fellowship with God and rejected it. Human beings are the only creatures who have the privilege of salvation in Jesus Christ.

How to Overcome the Wiles of the Devil and His Demonic Host

1. Realize that Satan is more powerful than you are.

You cannot hope to overcome Satan's attacks on your own. He is a "roaring lion. . . seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). He has defeated stronger people than you. It is clear in Scripture that the only hope we have against him is by submitting to God.

> *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* James 4:7

> *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, that he that is in the world."* 1 John 4:4

2. Pray daily for God's help against the enemy.

> *"And he said unto them, when ye pray say, . . . And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from [the] evil [one]."* Luke 11:2–4

3. Work constantly at maturing in every area of your Christian life. (Read Ephesians 6:10–18.)

4. Know the Bible very well.

Every time the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted by the Devil, He responded by quoting Scripture. But remember that Satan also quoted from the Bible. The problem with Satan's quoting of Scripture was his taking the verse out of context, misapplying it, and contradicting other Scripture with a false interpretation. You must know your Bible and know it well.

> *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."*
> Ps. 119:11

5. Guard against your areas of weakness and be sensitive to the circumstances which bring temptation to you.

> *"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."* Prov. 22:3

6. Ask God for the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

> *"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost . . . was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil."* Luke 4:1–2

A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

A mighty fortress is our God.
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper he amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe,
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And, armed with cruel hate
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing,—
Were not the right man on our side,
The man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he,
Lord Sabaoth his name,
From age to age the same,
And he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him,
His rage we can endure,
For lo! his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth;
The spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill,
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

—*Martin Luther* (1483–1546)

CHAPTER 9

THIRTY NINE
OLD TESTAMENT
BOOKS
LAW
HISTORY
POETRY
TWENTY SEVEN
NEW TESTAMENT
BOOKS
EPISTLES AND LETTERS

Eschatology

THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

Lesson 43 The Rapture

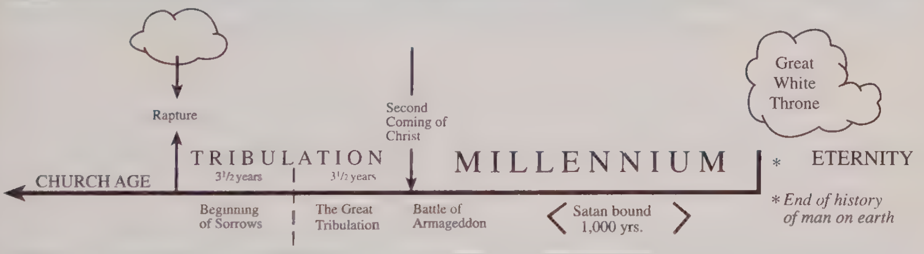
Every study of doctrine must have its eschatology. That which has a beginning must also have an end. The study of eschatology has been commonly divided into two parts:

General eschatology: The study of the future of the world.

Personal eschatology: The study of the future of the individual.

This chapter begins with the study of general eschatology and God's time line of the future as revealed in His Word.

ESCHATOLOGICAL TIME LINE


Rapture
Second Coming of Christ
Great White Throne
TRIBULATION
3½ years
3½ years
MILLENNIUM
*
ETERNITY
CHURCH AGE
Beginning of Sorrows
The Great Tribulation
Battle of Armageddon
Satan bound 1,000 yrs.
* End of history of man on earth

The next event on God's calendar is the rapture of the Church. The word *rapture* is never found in the Bible, but is based on a Latin word meaning "to catch up or to catch away" (1 Thess. 4:17). The Bible teaches *two separate stages in Christ's return*. At the **rapture** Christ comes for His saints; at His **second coming** He comes with His saints. At the rapture He comes in the clouds as Christians meet Him in the air; at His second coming He comes back to the earth. These two events will be separated by a seven-year period called the Tribulation. It will be a tremendous aid in the study of eschatology if the time line is referred to regularly throughout the study.

A. Scripture concerning the rapture

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

a. "Asleep"

This expression is used only of Christians to describe the state of their bodies at death (Luke 8:52–53; John 11:11–14; 1 Cor. 15:51).

b. "Sorrow not, even as others which have no hope"

This does not teach that a Christian should never sorrow over the death of a loved one. The stress of the phrase is not on the **fact** of sorrowing, but on the **contrast** between the sorrowing of this hopeless world and the sorrowing of the hopeful Christian.

c. "Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"

This speaks of the departed saints who have been with Christ ever since death. The immaterial being will be reunited with the body, which will rise from its earthly grave. Simultaneously, that corruptible body will become incorruptible (1 Cor. 15:52).

d. "Prevent"

This old English word means "precede." Those alive at the rapture will be "preceded" into Christ's presence by those Christians who have already died.

e. "A shout," "the voice of the archangel," "the trump of God"

These expressions are found whenever the Bible speaks of the rapture of the Church (1 Cor. 15:52; Rev. 4:1).

f. "To meet the Lord in the air"

This distinguishes the rapture from the second coming. At the rapture, Christians **meet** the Lord in the air. Seven years later, Christians will return **with** Christ to the earth (Rev. 19:7–16).

2. 1 Corinthians 15:51–53

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

a. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"

Christ's return in the clouds will be in an instant of time. At the speed of light the Christians will join Him in the air.

b. "We shall be changed"

The corruptible body of flesh must be changed. This is the final "redemption of the body" promised every Christian in Romans 8:11, 23. In this passage "immortality" refers to the body's inability to die from this point throughout eternity. It will be a glorious body "fashioned like unto his [Christ's] glorious body" (Phil. 3:21).

c. "Must put on incorruption"

No one could stand in Christ's presence in his natural condition. But because of Calvary the Christian stands justified in God's sight. Those Christians living at the rapture will immediately receive their glorified bodies.

3. Revelation 4:1

The book of Revelation is one of the few passages that views the events of the future chronologically. Revelation 1:19 gives a threefold outline of the book:

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

The **past** ("hast seen")—Revelation 1

The **present** ("are")—Revelation 2–3

The **future** ("shall be hereafter")—Revelation 4–22

According to this outline, the very first event of the future is found in Revelation 4:1:

> *"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me: which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."*

This passage also describes a "voice" and a "trumpet." God's words to John are a picture of God's call to all Christians at the rapture: "Come up hither and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."

B. Principles concerning the rapture

1. The promise of the rapture is **found only in the New Testament.**

This is logical. The promise of the rapture is to the Church. Since the Church was not begun until after the Old Testament was completed, it does not mention the rapture.

Once Christ established His church in the New Testament He gave her His promise that He would return for her in the clouds. By contrast, Christ's promise to the nation of Israel is His second coming to earth to rule and reign as the promised Messiah. The Church looks for His coming in the clouds: Israel looks for His coming to earth.

2. The promise of the rapture is **found primarily in the epistles.**

   This again makes sense. The epistles were written to **churches,** and the rapture is a promise to them. By contrast, when Christ speaks of His coming in the gospels, it is almost exclusively a description of His second coming to earth. As Christ spoke to His disciples, He was speaking to representatives of the Jewish nation. Their great hope was for their Messiah to rule in Jerusalem on the throne of David.

   By understanding the eschatological emphasis of each section of the Bible, fewer mistakes will be made in prophetic interpretation. One must always remember that while the Church looks for the rapture, the nation of Israel looks for the second coming of Christ, which will begin the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

PROPHETIC EMPHASIS OF THE BIBLE

Old Testament emphasizes the ***millennial reign of Christ.***

Gospels emphasize the ***second coming*** which ushers in the millennial reign of Christ.

Epistles emphasize the ***rapture.***

Revelation emphasizes the ***Tribulation.***

By keeping the above chart in mind, it is easy to organize the prophetic time line and keep from assuming that passages like Luke 17:20–37 refer to the rapture. Since that passage is in the gospels, it probably refers to the second coming of Christ to earth. The "one taken" and "the other left" are actually expressions that describe the separation that takes place at Christ's return to earth. One "shall be taken" (in death at Christ's coming), while the "other [will be] left" (to continue into the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on earth.) The answer to the question "Where, Lord [will they be taken]?" confirms this interpretation (Luke 17:37).

> *"Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles [vultures] be gathered together."* Luke 17:37
>
> *"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."* Rev. 19:17–18

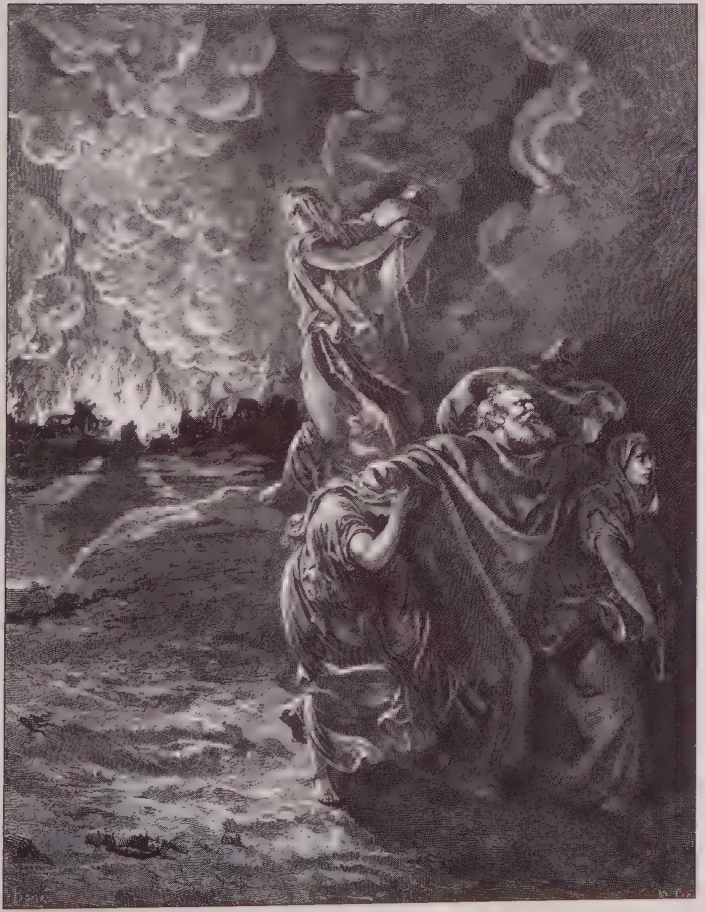
3. The rapture is **typified throughout the Bible.**

It appears to be God's pattern to remove the righteous before He sends great judgment. He will do the same thing before the Tribulation begins.

- **a.** God rescued Noah before He sent judgment. (Gen. 6:7–8; 7:1)
- **b.** God rescued Lot from Sodom before He sent judgment. (Gen. 18:23–25; 19:22)

Abraham used the character of God as an argument in his request for mercy on the city of Sodom—"That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: . . . Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25)

God Himself says later, "Haste thee [Lot], escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither" (Gen. 19:22). God has limited Himself by His word. It is not His nature to destroy the righteous with the wicked. He will "rapture" the righteous before the Tribulation judgments come. Even during the Tribulation He will be merciful to those who at that time accept Him as Savior.



"For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, . . . he hath shortened the days." Mark 13:19–20

The Flight of Lot
by Gustave Doré

"And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city."
Gen. 19:16

4. The **twofold return** (rapture and second coming) is an example of the **rule of double reference.**

   The *rule of double reference* is a very important principle in prophetic interpretation. It states that many Scripture references may discuss prophetic events as if they were occurring at the same time when in reality they are separated by great periods of time. (This is also called the "telescoping effect" because it brings events separated in time into close proximity, much as a telescope brings images separated in space into close proximity.)

   This principle is found throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament, the first and second coming of Christ were discussed in the same verse. This caused much confusion in the time of Christ. The disciples believed that Christ had come the first time to rule and reign. Even as He prepared to ascend, they asked the same question, "Wilt thou **at this time** restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) They did not realize the difference until later. Notice in the following verses the description of the characteristics of Christ's first and second comings.

   > *"The stone which the builders refused [first coming] is become the head stone of the corner [second coming]."* Ps. 118:22
   >
   > *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given [first coming]: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: . . . The Prince of Peace [second coming]."* Isa. 9:6
   >
   > *"Behold, thy King cometh unto thee . . . lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass [first coming]. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: . . . and his dominion shall be . . . to the ends of the earth [second coming]."* Zech. 9:9–10

   The same rule applies in the New Testament. Christ's return is actually in two stages: the rapture and the second coming. Other prophetic events may appear to be predicted for the same time period when in reality they are separated by a great amount of time.

   > *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life [the rapture]; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [the great white throne judgment]."* John 5:28–29

The Two Resurrections

John 5:28–29 describes two different resurrections, one for the saved and one for the lost. In each case the body of the dead individual will be rejoined with his soul at some time in the future. In the book of Revelation this resurrection of the saved is called the "first resurrection" because chronologically it occurs before the resurrection of the lost by more than one thousand years.

> *"And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. [But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.] This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death [separation from God eternally] hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."* Rev. 20:4–6
>
> Whereas the passage shows the joy of those who are a part of the first resurrection, the bracketed sentence reminds us of the somber future of the lost who at the second resurrection are "cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).
>
> **First Resurrection**—Saved—Resurrection of life
>
> **Second Resurrection**—Lost—Resurrection of damnation

5. The phrase **"Day of Christ"** usually refers to the **rapture.**

   "[You are] waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 1:7–8

   "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" 1 Cor. 5:5

   "We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus." 2 Cor. 1:14

   "[I pray] that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." Phil. 1:10

   "Holding forth the word of life: that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Phil. 2:16

* * *

Lesson
44 The Judgment Seat of Christ

After the rapture, the Biblical time line of the future moves ahead in two spheres: a **heavenly sphere** around God's throne and an **earthly sphere** around Satan's throne. The saints are with the Lord, while the sinners remain on earth.

A. Principles concerning the judgment seat of Christ

1. The judgment seat **occurs after the rapture.**

   After all the redeemed are caught up at the rapture, they will stand before Christ at the judgment seat (2 Cor. 5:10). How do we know the judgment seat of Christ must take place in heaven after the rapture and before the second coming? No verse distinctly teaches this but the following observations should be made:

   a. Christ states that He will bring His rewards with Him at the rapture. (Rev. 22:12)

   b. Reward is associated with the resurrection of the Christian at the rapture. (Luke 14:14)

   c. At the second coming the saints must have their position of rule in preparation for the millennial reign of Christ. (Luke 19:11–26; Rev. 20:4–6)

   d. The Bride of Revelation 19:8 (the scene of Revelation 19 immediately precedes the second coming) already has her reward in the form of "fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

2. The judgment seat of Christ is a **judgment of works, not of salvation.**

   Both the judgment of the saved and the judgment of the lost will be judgments of works. Only Christians will appear at the judgment seat of Christ. Only the unsaved will be judged at the great white throne judgment. Neither the judgment seat nor the great white throne will judge a person's salvation. The fact that each group is at its respective judgment already indicates the eternal destiny of each.

   The Bible does not describe the judgment seat as judicial at all. Jesus Christ took **all** of the believer's punishment upon Himself when He died at Calvary. The Christian at salvation was delivered from **all** judgment, past, present, and future. The believer's past sins will not be paraded before him at the judgment seat.

   > *"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."* John 5:24

> *"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."* Heb. 10:17

In the Olympic games, medals are given to the top three performers in a particular event. What happens to the ones who finish fourth, fifth, or sixth? Nothing! They simply fail to receive any award. They are not judged for their failure, although there may be sorrow because they failed to finish in the top three.

The judgment seat of Christ is very similar. There may be sorrow there, not because the believer's sin is judged, but because he did not receive all he could have attained.

> *"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."* 1 John 2:28

B. Scripture concerning the judgment seat of Christ

1. Romans 14:10

> *"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."*

The "we" of this verse indicates who will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. Paul uses this collective term to refer to all believers, whom he calls his "brethren." The Bible never teaches the idea of a general judgment (i.e., the concept that all mankind will stand before God at the same time as He separates the saved from the lost. Although Matt. 25:31–46 describes something similar, that passage is referring to the judgment of the Gentile nations, which occurs after the Battle of Armageddon.)

2. 2 Corinthians 5:10

> *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."*

a. "Receive the things done in his body"

It is clear from this passage that the judgment seat of Christ is the judgment of a believer's works. The believer himself will not be judged. In a sense it is comparable to a county fair. A person may enter several items for the judging. One item may receive a blue ribbon, and another may receive nothing. It is the individual's works that are judged, not the person himself.

b. "Bad"

This word actually means "worthless." Those things which were done with a wrong motive, by one's own effort, or for selfish reasons will not be rewarded. The fire will try every man's work (1 Cor. 3:14–15), and some works will be worthless and thus will receive no reward.

3. 1 Corinthians 3:10–15

> *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.*

> *But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."*

a. "How he buildeth thereupon"

This phrase emphasizes the importance of right motives in God's service.

b. "Of what sort it is"

God is interested in the quality of the Christian's service, not just the quantity.

c. "Suffer loss"

This expression means "fail to attain" or "lose one's reward." It is declaring that many will never attain what they could have attained if they had been more faithful. For the first time, the Christian will fully understand what his potential in God's service could have been.

4. Revelation 22:12

> *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."*

This verse further emphasizes the fact that the Christian's rewards are based on his works. The judgment seat of Christ has nothing to do with judging whether or not a Christian is saved. Only Christians will be present at the judgment seat of Christ. The fact that they are there proves that they are saved.

C. Greek words concerning the judgment seat of Christ

1. *Criterion*

In the Bible, this Greek word means the basis by which someone or something is judged. It is found only in James 2:6, where it is translated "judgment seats."

2. *Bema*

Bema is also translated "judgment seat" throughout the New Testament. It is the most common word used of the judgment seat of Christ. It is a reward seat, not a judicial bench. It was often used in athletic contests to judge an individual's performance and to reward the winner of each event. Since the Christian will never be judged for his sin, the idea of a "judgment seat" is a misnomer, for his sin was judged at Calvary; Jesus Christ already took that judgment when He died on the cross.

D. Results of the judgment seat of Christ

1. The believer **may receive many rewards.**

   If the Christian's motive is right and he does not seek his own glory, he will be rewarded. 1 Corinthians 4:5 indicates that **all** of our work will receive the praise of God.

   The believer will also realize his unworthiness in his service for God. His many flimsy excuses will seem like dust as he stands before his Lord.

2. The believer **will receive particular rewards.**

   a. An incorruptible crown

   > *"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."* 1 Cor. 9:25

   b. A crown of rejoicing

   > *"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"* 1 Thess. 2:19

   c. A crown of righteousness

   > *"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* 2 Tim. 4:8

   d. A crown of life

   > *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."* James 1:12

   e. A crown of glory

   > *"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."* 1 Pet. 5:4

3. The believer **will receive different levels of reward.**

   How can each person enjoy Heaven equally if there will be different levels of reward and position in Heaven?

   a. Each Christian will be indefectible (not able to sin), so there will be no jealousy.

   Each will rejoice in the accomplishments of others.

   b. Part of our reward may be an increased capacity to enjoy Heaven.

   Perhaps the more one does for the Lord in this life, the more his ability to enjoy heaven will be increased. The blessings of Heaven will be the same for all, but the ability to enjoy those pleasures may vary.

4. The believer **will cast his crowns at Jesus' feet.**

   In Revelation 4:10 the elders are already seated in heavenly places. The elders, it is believed, represent the saints of all the ages. They realize that the only reason they received their crowns in the first place was because of redemption provided in Jesus Christ.

> *"The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."* Rev. 4:10–11

5. The believer **will enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb.**

(Read Revelation 19:7–10.)

Having received his robe of righteousness, the Christian is now ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb. In a beautiful way the Lord pictures His relationship to us by the events surrounding the ancient wedding ceremony.

> "Though marriage customs varied in the ancient world, usually there were three major aspects: (1) The marriage contract was often consummated by the parents when the parties to the marriage were still children and not ready to assume adult responsibility. The payment of a suitable dowry was often a feature of the contract. When consummated, the contract meant that the couple were legally married. (2) At a later time when a couple had reached a suitable age, the second step in the wedding took place. This was a ceremony in which the bridegroom accompanied by his friends would go to the house of the bride and escort her to his home. This is the background of the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25:1–13. (3) Then the bridegroom would bring his bride to his home and the marriage supper, to which guests were invited, would take place. It was such a wedding feast that Christ attended at Cana as recorded in John 2:1–12."
>
> —*John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 271.

Each of these three aspects is pictured in salvation. (1) Our acceptance of Christ's salvation sealed the marriage contract with Him. (2) At the rapture Christ will come for us, His bride. (3) Once joined with Christ "in the clouds" (1 Thess. 4:17), we will fellowship with Him and all the redeemed for all eternity. It appears that the marriage supper of the Lamb may only begin in Revelation 19:7–10 and will continue as we accompany Christ to earth for the Millennium.

* * *

Lesson

45 The Tribulation

Between the rapture and the second coming there will be a seven-year period of time on earth known as the **Tribulation.** There will be judgments poured out upon this earth that will be unlike anything that has happened before it or after it in the history of this planet. God is longsuffering, but eventually His judgment upon this earth must come. Since Christians will meet the Lord in the air at the rapture, they will not be affected by the Tribulation judgments on earth.

In Scripture the word *tribulation* has three different meanings:

- It can mean trouble in general. (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom. 5:3; 12:12)
- It can mean the seven-year period between the rapture and the second coming. (Dan. 9:24–27; 12:1; Jer. 30:7–9)
- It can mean the second half of the seven-year period, called "the great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21). [The first half of the seven-year period is often referred to as the "beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:8).]

A. The purpose of the Tribulation

1. To **judge a Christ-rejecting world** (Rev. 15:1; 16:1; 19:15)

   "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." Rev. 16:1

2. To **reveal Satan's true character** (Rev. 12:7–12)
3. To **demonstrate how much men's sinful hearts can imagine and do** (Rev. 16:8–9, 10–11, 21)
4. To **humble the nation of Israel to the place of repentance** (Jer. 30:7–9; Zech. 12:9–14:5)

   The Tribulation is called the "Time of Jacob's Trouble."

5. To **eternally save multitudes of people from every nation**

   After the rapture, the only ones left on earth are unsaved people. Many of them realize what has happened and accept Jesus Christ as Savior. In an intensified effort to save multitudes, God empowers many of these Tribulation converts to preach the gospel "in all the world for a witness unto all nations" before the end comes (Matt. 24:14). Those who receive the gospel will be persecuted mercilessly by a godless society and will be martyred for their faith.

   a. Early martyrs (Rev. 6:9–11)
   b. 144,000 Jews (Rev. 7:1–8; 14:1–5)
   c. Countless Gentiles (Rev. 7:9–17)
   d. Two witnesses (Rev. 11:2–14)

- **e.** Other Jews (Rev. 12:13–17)
- **f.** Beast rejecters (Rev. 13:7)
- **g.** Followers of the Lamb (Rev. 14:4–5)
- **h.** Commandment keepers (Rev. 14:12–13)

6. To **prepare the world for the millennial reign of Jesus Christ** (Rev. 19:1–6)

B. The participants of the Tribulation

1. The Antichrist (Rev. 13:1–10)

a. His wonder (Rev. 13:1–2)

There has been a tremendous "awe" attached to this mysterious individual of the future. What one believes about him should be based on Scripture.

(1) The wonder of his names

(a) Antichrist

The prefix *anti-* has two possible meanings. It is usually thought of as "against"; therefore, the Antichrist is **"against Christ."** This will certainly be true. But the prefix also means "in the place of" or "in the stead of." He will come "in the place of Christ" as a counterfeit, false Messiah. He will come promising peace. Halfway through the Tribulation, his true character will be revealed. The word "antichrist" is found only in the epistles of John, the author of the book of Revelation (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

(b) "Man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:3)

(c) "Son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3)

Because of this verse some have suggested that the Antichrist might be Judas reincarnated. Judas is given the title "son of perdition" in John 17:12. However, that does not seem to be enough evidence to confirm that as factual.

(d) "Prince that shall come" (Dan. 9:26)

(e) "Beast" (Rev. 11:7; 13:1–2)

This is the most commonly used name for the Antichrist. It is found thirty-six times in the book of Revelation. He is pictured as coming out of the sea (Rev. 13:1). Since the "sea" often speaks of the Gentile nations, some believe that the antichrist must be a Gentile. However, Daniel 11:37 is used to suggest he may be Jewish ("Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers"). No one knows for sure.

(2) The wonder of his number (Rev. 13:16–18)

There has also been an "awe" attached to his number, **666.** People have used that number to "decode" the identity of the Antichrist. Although it is true that in Bible times letters had numerical equivalents, the idea has been taken to an extreme. If "A" = 100, "B" = 101, "C" = 102, etc., then HITLER = 107 + 108 + 119 + 111 + 104 + 117 = 666. Hitler's death confirmed that he was not the Antichrist. But this has not been the only century which has tried such mathematical gymnastics. After the first century some attempted to make Nero the Antichrist by taking the consonants of "Kaisar Neron" and obtaining the sum of 666.

The mark of the Beast will be given to those who worship the Antichrist and his image. Evidently the number will be necessary to buy or sell. Perhaps laser-beam scanners will be used to read the number on the hand or forehead.

b. His wound (Rev. 13:3)

The "wonder" of this individual increases because he appears to have the ability to come back from the dead (another example of his being a "counterfeit Christ"). But did he really die? The phrase "as it were" might indicate his "death" and "resurrection" were faked to gain the confidence of the world in his ability.

c. His wonders (Rev. 13:3)

The Antichrist seems to have a wonderful charisma. His ability to influence the world is further seen in 2 Thess. 2:11–12.

d. His worship (Rev. 13:4, 12, 15)

He commits the Abomination of Desolation by demanding worship. In every way he wants to take the place of the true Messiah. Because of the great power given him by Satan ("the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" Rev. 13:2) he appears invincible. As a result, the world falls at his feet.

e. His warfare (Rev. 13:7)

The phrase "power was given unto him" is used throughout Revelation to remind the reader that the only power the Antichrist can have is what God *allows* him to have (Rev. 12:9; 13:4). The Antichrist's true character begins to be revealed. He is not like the true Christ at all. The Antichrist's power is in **inflicting** suffering; Christ's power in the lives of believers is the result of His **accepting** suffering.

> *"Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"*
> Rev. 13:4

2. **The False Prophet** (Rev. 13:11–16)
   a. He is called "another beast" (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10) or "beast coming up out of the earth" (Rev. 13:11).
   b. He is the third member of the "Unholy trinity," Satan's counterfeit of the true trinity. (Rev. 16:13)

PERSONAGE	COUNTERFEIT
God the Father	**Satan** (Dragon)—the power behind the scene
God the Son	**Antichrist** (First Beast)—does his "father's" bidding
God the Holy Spirit	**False Prophet** (Second Beast)—speaks not of himself but points to another

   c. He causes men to worship the Antichrist. (Rev. 13:12)
   d. He performs great miracles. (Rev. 13:13)
   e. He "animates" the image of the first beast. (Rev. 13:14–15)

      > *"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."* Rev. 13:15

      Unless God gives him the ability to create life, the False Prophet probably activates some type of a robot. Since the apostle John has never seen anything like this as he writes Revelation, he describes it with the language available to him in the first century.

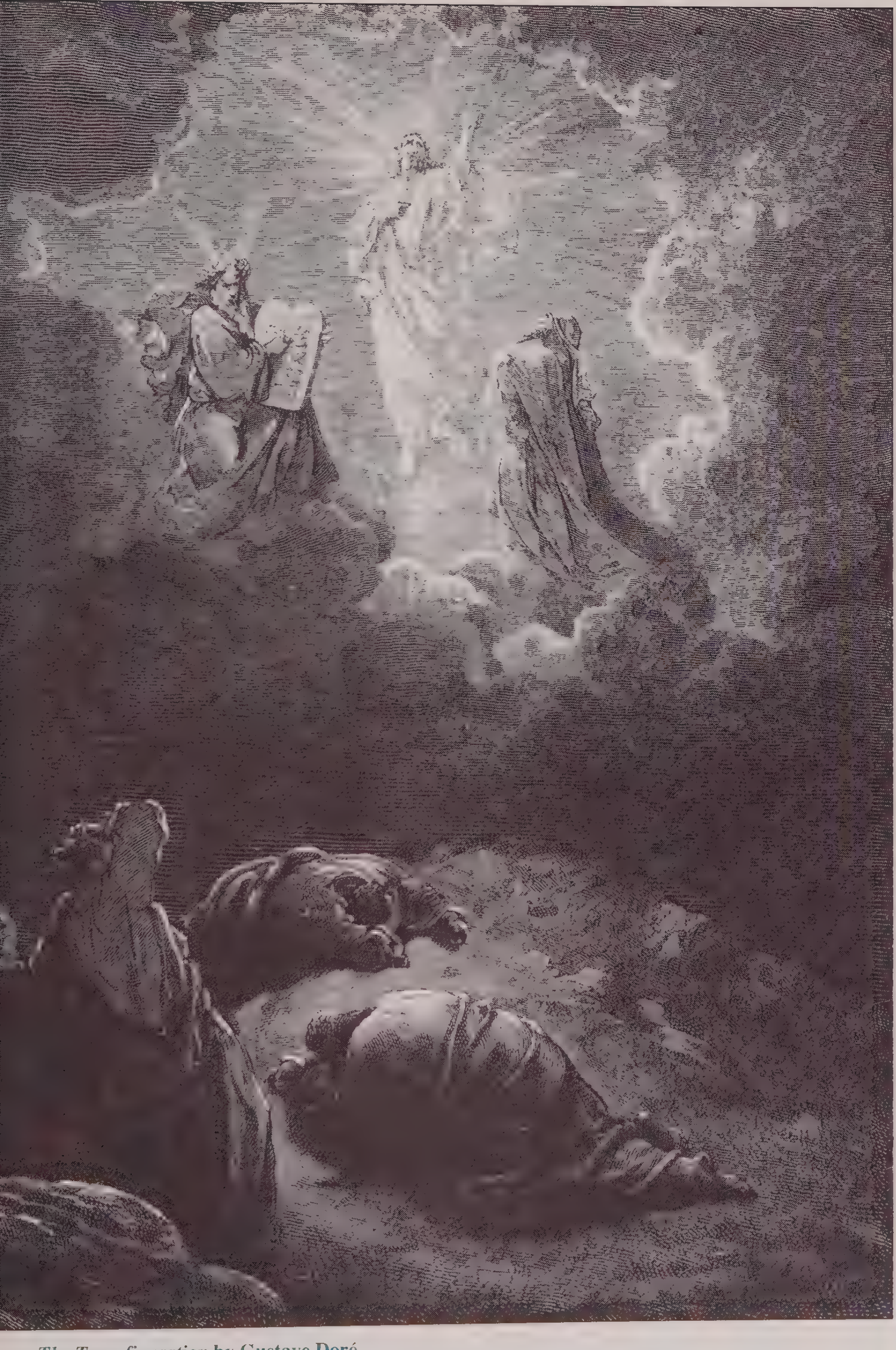
   f. He requires a mark in the right hand or forehead. (Rev. 13:16–17)
   g. He sentences those disobedient to him to death. (Rev. 13:15)

      Many will refuse to take the mark of the Beast and will be killed as soon as they are captured. Many Jews will be in that number. They will flee into the wilderness to escape the death penalty (Matt. 24:15–26; Rev. 12:13–17). When all hope seems gone, Jesus will return to the earth (Matt. 24:27–31).

   h. He is cast with the Antichrist into the Lake of Fire at the Battle of Armageddon. (Rev. 19:20)

3. **The two witnesses** (Rev. 11:3–12)

   God's two witnesses minister during the first half of the Tribulation and are given unlimited power. Many suggestions have been made as to their identity. Since the Bible does not reveal who they are, one should not be dogmatic in his belief. Moses and Elijah, both of whom were present at the transfiguration, have been suggested as possibilities.



The Transfiguration **by Gustave Doré**
"And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus." *Mark 9:4*

a. Elijah

(1) He was a prophet. (Rev. 11:3, 6, 10)

(2) It was prophesied that he would return. (Mal. 4:5–6)

(3) His powers were similar to those of the two witnesses. (cf. 1 Kings 17:1 and Rev. 11:6)

(4) He has not yet died. (2 Kings 2:11)

Some suggest that Hebrews 9:27 ("it is appointed unto men once to die") requires that every person die. However, this is not a good argument. *Death* means "separation." Elijah was "separated" from his old body and appeared "in [his] glory" (Luke 9:30–31) on the mount of Transfiguration. Hebrews 9:27 must be taken as a general rule. All believers alive at the rapture will not "die." And some like Lazarus and Eutychus died more than once.

b. Moses

(1) He also was a prophet. (Rev. 11:3, 6, 10)

Moses represents the law, and Elijah represents the prophets.

(2) He was present at the Transfiguration. (Luke 9:30)

(3) He represents one of the two major miracle-working eras of the Old Testament.

(a) Moses and Aaron

(b) Elijah and Elisha

(4) He brought plagues upon the earth by the power of God. (Exod. 7:19; Rev. 11:6)

(5) Satan disputed over his body because he knew he would return as one of the two witnesses. (Jude 9)

c. Unknown

It is not known for sure who the two witnesses will be. Since John the Baptist partially fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi 4:6 (Matt. 11:11–14; 17:11–13; Luke 1:17), it appears that the two witnesses must come only in the *power* of Moses and Elijah.

C. The Scriptures concerning the Tribulation

1. Daniel 9:24–27

This passage describes the Seventieth Week of Daniel, or the Tribulation. Daniel gives the first indication of the length of time of the Tribulation. The Jewish people were accustomed to thinking in terms of "weeks" of years or seven-year periods of time. (Jacob worked for Rachel for one "week of years," etc.) This concept is further confirmed by expressions such as "forty and two months" (Rev. 11:2) and "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev. 11:3) for one-half of the Tribulation (Dan. 9:27).

$3^1/_2$ years = 42 months = 1,260 days

Prophetic years consist of 360 days each.

At the beginning of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will make a covenant of peace with the nation of Israel. But in the middle of the seven years of Tribulation he will reveal his true nature and break his covenant with Israel. At that time he will commit the Abomination of Desolation. He will commit this by desecrating the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and demanding worship of himself.

2. **Matthew 24–25**

This passage is in the Olivet Discourse. Christ is speaking to His disciples (representatives of the Jewish nation) and promising them He will return to the earth to set up His earthly kingdom. He describes in detail Israel's persecution just before He returns to the earth in glory.

3. **Revelation 4–19**

The largest section of the book of Revelation is devoted to the discussion of the Tribulation. The similarities between the Olivet Discourse and Revelation 6 are intriguing.

EVENT	MATTHEW 24	REVELATION 6
War	24:6	6:4
Famine	24:7	6:5–6
Pestilence	24:7	6:8
Earthquake	24:7	6:12

D. The progress of the Tribulation

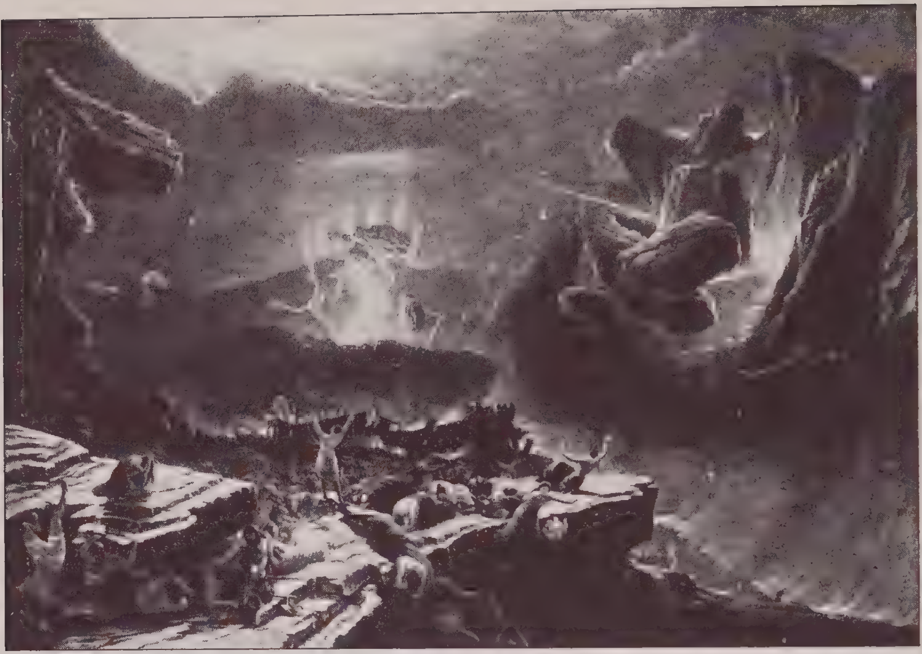
1. As the Tribulation progresses, **the punishments become more severe.**

As the end of the Tribulation approaches, the judgments accelerate. The first part of the Tribulation seems fairly slow in developing. But by the end, the judgments of man, Satan, and God are all overlapping each other. The judgments become more and more intense. For the nation of Israel, all hope seems gone. But just when everything is the darkest, Jesus breaks through the blue and returns to the earth.

a. Seal judgments (man-made): Rev. 6:1–19:21

b. Trumpet judgments (satanic): Rev. 8:6–19:21

c. Vial (bowl) judgments (divine): Rev. 16:1–19:21



***The Sixth Seal Opened* by Francis Danby** (d. 1861)
"And [the people on the earth] said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" *Rev. 6:16–17*

2. As the Tribulation progresses, **Satan and his minions are revealed for what they really are.**
   - **a.** The Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel. (Dan. 9:27)
   - **b.** The Antichrist commits the Abomination of Desolation (he desecrates the temple and demands to be worshiped as God).

     "And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate." Dan. 9:27

     "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation . . . flee." Matt. 24:15–16

     "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Luke 21:20

     "so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" 2 Thess. 2:4

     "And he [the False Prophet] . . . causeth the earth . . . to worship the first beast [the Antichrist]." Rev. 13:12
   - **c.** God's two witnesses are killed. (Rev. 11:7–13)

     In the first half of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:1–6), God's two witnesses have virtually unlimited ability to spread the gospel. But in the middle of the Tribulation, they are killed and their dead bodies lie in the street for "three days and an half." Perhaps it will be by the means of satellite communications that "they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies." The people on earth will rejoice and exchange gifts because of the death of God's two witnesses. But after the three and one-half days, they will be resurrected and ascend to Heaven. All the earth will witness a resurrection and an ascension.

d. Many will be martyred because of their refusal to "worship the image of the beast" and take his mark. (Rev. 13:15–18)

> *"And he [the False Prophet] had power to give life unto the image of the beast [the Antichrist], that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six."*

Receiving the mark of the Beast during the Tribulation period is the "unpardonable sin" of that time.

> *"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."* Rev. 14:9–11

Lesson

46 The Second Coming of Christ and the Millennium

A. The second coming of Christ

As the seven-year Tribulation comes to a close, the judgments of the Lord upon this earth intensify. They are happening so quickly that the inhabitants of the earth hardly have time to recover from one judgment before the next judgment falls. Instead of bowing on their faces before a righteous God, the ungodly raise their fists in defiance of the One Who is sending the judgment (read Rev. 16:8–11, 17–21).

But the ungodly are not the only ones suffering near the close of the Tribulation. Because the Antichrist desecrated their temple and demanded worship, a remnant of Jewish people reject him and refuse to take the mark of the Beast. The False Prophet has decreed that anyone found without the mark of the Beast shall die (Rev. 13:15).

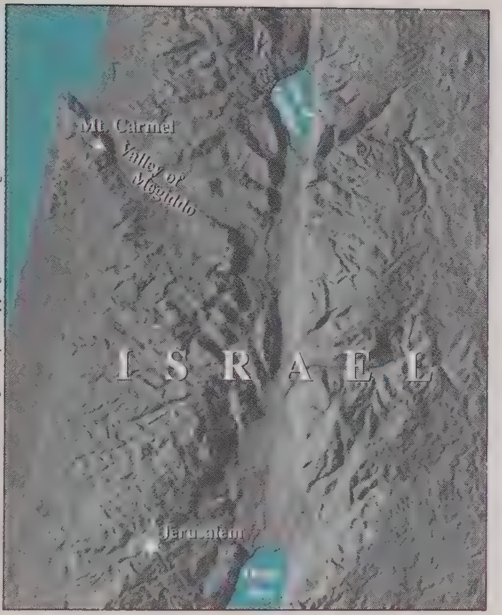
The Jewish people have been persecuted throughout history, but nothing can compare to this "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). God hides this remnant of Jews or they would be killed by the Antichrist. They will gaze heavenward, longing to see the promised Messiah (Luke 17:22). In their darkest hour, Jesus Christ will return in glory (Luke 17:24) with his angels (Mark 8:38) and the great host of the redeemed to rescue Israel from the oppression (Rom. 11:26) of the Antichrist and the False Prophet (Rev. 19:20).

> *"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."* Rev. 19:11–16

This is the glorious event foretold by the angels at Christ's ascension. Christ returns to earth in the same manner He left (Acts 1:11). The armies of the earth have gathered in Palestine, all according to God's perfect plan. The Battle of Armageddon ("mount of slaughter") is about to begin.

Why have all these armies gathered in Palestine? Perhaps they are all carrying out the final execution of the Jews who have refused to take the mark of the Beast. Some have suggested that as Christ returns, the New Jerusalem, a satellite space city, begins its descent toward the earth (Rev. 21:1–2). This event has not gone unnoticed by the sophisticated tracking devices of the world. The armies of the world therefore pinpoint its destination as Jerusalem and gather there to do battle against what they interpret as invaders from outer space.

The armies have gathered from all the world and have arrived at the **Valley of Megiddo.** Megiddo is located today in northern Palestine near the Mediterranean Sea. Looking west from Mt. Carmel one can see the Mediterranean Sea stretching out before him. Looking east from Mt. Carmel one sees the wide expanse of the Valley of Megiddo. Napoleon called it the greatest natural battlefield in the world.



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Although the main confrontation takes place there, the armies cover all of Palestine from north to south, a distance of two hundred miles (Rev. 14:20). The Battle of Armageddon will not take long.

The Lord will destroy His enemies with the word of His mouth (Rev. 19:15). It appears that He will do all the fighting against His enemies, for His garments are stained with blood (Rev. 19:13) as "he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15). By contrast, the garments of the saints are "white and clean" (Rev. 19:14).

As the battle ends, the Lord casts the Antichrist and False Prophet into the Lake of Fire. Hence, they are the first two residents of that place that was prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). It may seem strange that Satan is not the first resident of the Lake of Fire, but, as we shall see, God has one more job for him to do.

> *"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."* Rev. 19:20–21

After the Antichrist and False Prophet are thrown into the Lake of Fire, Jesus Christ completes the final stages of the Battle. Vultures are called to gather for a feast of carcasses. Vultures feasting upon carcasses are mentioned four times in Scripture (Ezek. 39:17–20; Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37; and Rev. 19:17–19, 21). In every case it is a reference to the Battle of Armageddon. God calls it the "supper of the great God" (Rev. 19:17) as the vultures feast on the carcasses and the blood flows "unto the horse bridles" (Rev. 14:20).

The land of Palestine is left strewn with bones from human carcasses. Christ begins His wonderful millennial reign, but first He takes care of several things. An angel from Heaven casts Satan into the bottomless pit (the abyss) for a thousand years.

> *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."* Rev. 20:1–3

The remnant of the nation of Israel begins cleaning up the sanctuary that was desecrated by the Antichrist (Dan. 8:13–14; 12:11) as well as burying all the bones left by the vultures after the Battle of Armageddon.

> *"And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land. Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord God. And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search. And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamongog. And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land."* Ezek. 39:12–16

The prophet Ezekiel also reveals that for **seven years** the instruments of war left at Armageddon's battle scene will be used as firewood (Ezek. 39:9–10).

B. The millennial reign of Christ

1. The **chronology** of the Millennium

> *"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. . . . This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."* Rev. 20:4–6

Jesus Christ will then set up His earthly kingdom as He promised. His reign is called the *Millennium* (this Latin word means "one thousand years"). All believers in Heaven will return to the earth with Christ in the heavenly Jerusalem that John saw coming down out of Heaven. These **glorified saints** will rule and reign with Christ during the Millennium. Over whom will they rule? Only a few earth people (all of whom are believers) survive the Tribulation to go into the Millennium, and to them children are born until the earth is well populated again. The glorified saints in glorified bodies will reign over these earth people and their children. By the end of the thousand years, earth's population will be "as the sand of the sea" (Rev. 20:8).

Perhaps we can liken it to our own day when angels, which are invisible to us, minister to us. Though we are not aware of the angels, they are very much involved in our activities. In a similar manner, during the Millennium God will let the glorified saints assist Him in ruling the people living on earth at that time.

Christ will rule with a rod of iron. Those few earth dwellers who dare to sin outwardly will die. Evidently Christ will allow individuals to rebel inwardly, but not outwardly without suffering the immediate consequences.

Christ will rule the earth with spiritual purity. His reign will be one of righteousness (Matt. 25:37; Isa. 60:21; Mal. 4:2), holiness (Isa. 4:3–4; Ps. 47:8–9), and truth (Dan. 8:12; Isa. 10:20; Ps. 98:3). He will demand obedience from all the people of the earth (Eph. 1:9–10).

2. The **description** of the Millennium

> *"And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."* Isa. 11:5–9

The Old Testament has many descriptions of the millennial reign of Christ. It is the event looked for by the Jews ever since they were told that the Messiah would sit upon the throne of His father David (Acts 2:25–31) in Jerusalem.

Following is a list of some of the concepts the Bible uses to describe the Millennium:

a. Peace and joy (Isa. 2:4, Mic. 4:3; Isa. 9:3–4)

> *"Neither shall they learn war any more."* Mic. 4:3

The earth will enjoy peace between nations; instruments of warfare will be made instruments of peace.

b. Justice (Isa. 9:7; 11:3–5)

> *"to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever"* Isa. 9:7

c. Removal of the physical curse (Isa. 11:6–9; 35:1–7; Ezek. 36:33–35; Joel 2:21–24)

> *"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb."* Isa. 11:6
>
> *"The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."* Isa. 35:1

d. Agricultural prosperity (Isa. 35:1–7; Ezek. 36:33–35)

> *"For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."* Isa. 35:6
>
> *"This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden."* Ezek. 36:35

e. No carnivorous animals

> *"The lion shall eat straw like the bullock."* Isa. 65:25

f. Disease and deformity removed (Isa. 33:24; 35:1–7; 29:17–19; Mic. 4:6–7)

> *"The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."* Isa. 35:5–6

g. Family life continued on earth

The earth people will live the typical life, having children, etc. (Jer. 30:20; Isa. 11:6, 65:23)

> *"And a little child shall lead them."* Isa. 11:6

h. Longevity restored

> *"For the child shall die an hundred years old."* Isa. 65:20

Conditions of the Millennium may be similar to those before the flood, when the life span was 700 to 900 years. If a person dies at one hundred years of age, he will be considered to be "just a child."

i. Unified language

> *"For then will I turn to the people a pure language . . . to serve him [the Lord] with one consent."* Zeph. 3:9

During the Millennium, all people will praise the Lord in a common language. Circumstances will be similar to those before the Tower of Babel when all mankind spoke the same language. Whereas in Genesis 11 men used that singular language to glorify self, in the Millennium men will use a unified language to glorify God.

j. Unified worship (Mic. 5:10–15; Zech. 8:20–23; 13:2)

> *"Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the* LORD *of hosts in Jerusalem."* Zech. 8:22

k. Presence of God

> *"My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."* Ezek. 37:28

l. Freedom from oppression (Isa. 14:3–6; Joel 3:16–17)

> *"How hath the oppressor ceased!"* Isa. 14:4

m. Labor (Isa. 62:8–9; 65:23)

> *"They shall not labour in vain."* Isa. 65:23

Evidently the curse upon the ground will be removed during the Millennium. Just as man enjoyed his work before the fall, so millennial man will enjoy his labor in the Millennium. Then no work will be tedious or meaningless.

n. Comfort

> *"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God."* Isa. 40:1

The nation of Israel, persecuted mercilessly during the Tribulation, will be comforted by God during the Millennium.

o. Instruction

> *"The* Lord *. . . will teach us of his ways."* Isa. 2:3

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus on Easter afternoon (Luke 24), the millennial population will be taught the wonders of God's Word by its omniscient Author.

p. Sacrifices reinstated

> *"And all they that sacrifice shall come."* Zech. 14:21

It may appear strange that during the Millennium the Old Testament sacrifices will be offered once again, but the Millennium will present an unusual set of circumstances. Children will be born into a world free of open sin. There will be little to remind these new generations of the serious consequences of sin and the reason for Christ's sacrificial death.

The sacrifices will serve as object lessons to teach the people the sinfulness of sin, and therefore, the need for Christ's payment on Calvary as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. As the Old Testament sacrifices never saved anyone but showed them the great need for a sacrifice for their sin, so in the Millennium, it will not save anyone but show them the need for Christ's sacrifice so they can appreciate and appropriate by faith His sacrificial death.

q. Missionary witness (Isa. 66:18--21; Ezek. 36:24–31; Zech. 14:16–21)

> *"And they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles."* Isa. 66:19

* * *

Lesson

47 The Great White Throne

Soon after the Millennium, a great white throne appears as the heaven and earth are destroyed (Rev. 20:7, 11). The great white throne is the focal point of the judgment of all unbelievers of all the ages. It is not a judgment of their salvation; their presence before God at that time will show they are unsaved. Rather, it is a judgment of their works. As a result of this judgment, all of the unsaved will be cast into the Lake of Fire forever and ever.

A. The events preceding the great white throne judgment

1. Satan is "loosed a little season." (Rev. 20:3)

Evidently, God wants those in Heaven and those on earth to know who are the "wheat" and who are the "tares" of the millennial kingdom. Therefore, when Satan is loosed a little season at the end of the Millennium, God gives him one last opportunity to deceive the nations. Satan gathers together an amazingly large number of followers, "as the sand of the sea" in number. How could this happen in the midst of a perfect environment? Evidently, this innumerable host of unconverted people keep their rebellion inward and subdued until Satan appears on the scene, which confirms the fact that changing a man's environment will not change the man inwardly. Man is a sinner by nature, and only the Lord Jesus Christ can change the individual from the inside out.

Satan gathers this group from the "four quarters of the earth," which indicates that all the earth is well populated. The unbelievers cause no problem until Satan is loosed. The unsaved millennial citizens will be much like Judas Iscariot, who was never converted but lived a respectable life and even had a Christian testimony; yet when Satan entered him, he turned traitor to the Lord.

> *"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."* Rev. 20:7–8

2. Satan's final battle ends in defeat. (Rev. 20:8–9)

> *"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."* Rev. 20:9

The phrase "Gog and Magog" is used in this passage as well as in Ezekiel 38–39. The phrase refers to two different battles. The battle in Ezekiel probably begins during the Tribulation. As the armies of the north come against unprotected Israel (Ezek. 38:11), God rains "great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Ezek. 38:22), killing five-sixths of them (Ezek. 39:2). It culminates later in the Battle of Armageddon. Gog is their leader (perhaps a descendant of the rebellious tribe of Reuben—1 Chron. 5:1–4), and Magog is their nation. Magog appears to be a reference to Russia because of its geographical location to the north of Israel (Ezek. 39:2) and because of references to Meshech (Moscow) and Tubal (Tobolsk) in Ezekiel 38:2–3 and 39:1.

By contrast, the battle of Revelation occurs at the end of the Millennium when **all** the Devil's army is destroyed by fire "from God out of heaven" (Rev. 20:9). At that time the phrase "Gog and Magog" will refer to all Christ-rejecters of the Millennium who reside "in the four quarters of the earth" (Rev. 20:8). Their destruction will be immediate.

3. **Satan is finally cast into the Lake of Fire.**

> *"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."* Rev. 20:10

Satan is then cast into the place that has been prepared for him. Revelation 20:10 strongly teaches the eternality of the Lake of Fire. The Beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet have already been there for one thousand years. It is clear that they have not been annihilated; they will continue to be "tormented day and night for ever and ever." What a solemn thought!

B. The events surrounding the great white throne judgment

> *"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*
> Rev. 20:11–15

This passage describes the resurrection of the lost (or the resurrection of damnation—John 5:29). The first resurrection, or resurrection of life (John 5:29; Rev. 20:4–6) will occur more than one thousand years before the great white throne judgment. We could liken the resurrection to two crops: wheat and tares. The first resurrection is God's wheat—believers; the second resurrection is the Devil's tares—unbelievers.

1. **The destruction of the first heaven and the first earth** (Rev. 20:11; 21:1)

> *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away."* Rev. 21:1

As John views the approach of the great white throne, he sees the first heaven and earth flee from the presence of the One on the throne. God destroys the earth and the universe as it is now known. Thus the physical universe is purged of all sin brought about by Satan's rebellion and Adam's fall, and the history of planet Earth is complete. Time, as we now know it, will be no more.

2. **The judgment of all the unsaved** (Read Rev. 20:12–15.)

   a. Small and great (Rev. 20:12)

   God is no respecter of persons; therefore, a person may be considered "great" in man's eyes but a sinner in God's eyes. All who stand before God at this judgment are there because they have rejected His wonderful offer of salvation in His Son, Jesus Christ.

   b. Books and the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. 20:12)

   The main purpose of the great white throne judgment is to administer degrees of punishment to the lost, which is taken from the "books." The Lamb's Book of Life is opened to confirm in each man's mind that his name is not written there.

   > *"And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."* Rev. 20:12

   Until the great white throne judgment, all of the unsaved dead suffer the same degree in Hell. The word *hell* is used in the Bible as the place of torment **before** the great white throne judgment. The Lake of Fire is the place of torment **after** the great white throne judgment. After the great white throne judgment, each unsaved person will suffer a different degree of punishment.

   How is this determined? Evidently the books which are opened reveal the **opportunities** an individual had to be saved. The more opportunities a person had, the more accountability he has.

   > *"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."* Luke 12:48

   > *"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."* Matt. 11:20–24

   The cities in which Christ did His mighty works had more opportunities to repent than cities such as Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom. God said it would be "more tolerable" for cities with little opportunity than for cities with much opportunity.

Perhaps part of that "degree of punishment" will be the mental anguish of remembering all the opportunities that one had to know God. The more opportunities one had, the more memories he will have. The degree of mental anguish is probably increased by allowing those in the Lake of Fire to have accurate memories.

> *"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."* Luke 16:25

The Book (of Life) determines one's **destiny.**
The **books** determine one's **degree of punishment.**

c. "Death and hell" will be cast into the Lake of Fire. (Rev. 20:14)

In this passage the material part of an unsaved person's being (the body) is represented by the word "death." The immaterial part of an unsaved person's being (the soul/spirit) is represented by the word "hell." Both the material and the immaterial part of a man will be cast together into the Lake of Fire.

The Lake of Fire is the second death. It is a second type of spiritual death. Spiritual death is separation from God *temporarily*. The second type of spiritual death is separation from God *eternally*. It is also referred to as eternal death. The believer does not have to bear either type of spiritual death, for Christ bore it for him on the cross.

The unsaved people standing there at the great white throne judgment will find that their names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life and that there is no escape. The rich man in Hell (Luke 16:19–31) never asked Abraham for release from his punishment. He knew he was receiving exactly what he deserved. Unsaved men will be without excuse as the God of love and justice casts the wicked into the Lake of Fire forever and ever.

We must remember that one need never stand before the great white throne. It is not God's will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance and faith in Christ. All that is necessary is for an individual to acknowledge his sin, realize that Jesus is God, and accept his sacrificial death at Calvary for his salvation. Those who have accepted Christ as Savior need to actively give this good news to friends, relatives, and acquaintances; we need to love them enough to warn them of their eternal fate. Jesus commanded us to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

Lesson

48 Personal Eschatology

This is the first of three lessons on personal eschatology, or the study of the future of the individual. General eschatology covers the events beginning with the rapture and ending at the great white throne. After the great white throne judgment, the believers will spend their eternity with God in Heaven while the unbelievers spend their eternity in the Lake of Fire. Personal eschatology studies the death and destiny of the unsaved as well as the death and destiny of the believer.

A. Death

1. Definition of death

Death means separation. For the Christian, death is not to be feared.

> *"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* Phil. 1:21

2. Three types of death

a. Physical death

Physical death is separation of the soul and spirit from the body. This is the most common use of the word *death*. When Adam sinned, he began to die physically. The sentence of physical death passed upon all mankind since the Garden of Eden.

> *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."* Rom. 5:12
>
> *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* 1 Cor. 15:22

Physical death was overcome by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

> *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."* John 11:25–26

All individuals, saved and lost, will experience a resurrection. The saved will be resurrected **in** Christ; the lost will be resurrected apart from Christ.

> *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."* John 5:28–29
>
> *"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."* Rev. 20:6

b. Spiritual death

Spiritual death is the separation of the individual from God because of his sin. Adam introduced both spiritual death and physical death into the world when he sinned. In answer to the question, "Did Adam die when he sinned, as God had promised?" the answer is "Yes!" Adam died spiritually, because his sin separated him from his Creator.

> *"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."* Isa. 59:2

Blood (signifying a sacrificial death) had to be shed in order to restore man to a right relationship with God. Spiritual death can now be annulled by spiritual **regeneration** (John 3:3–6; 1 Cor. 2:12; Col. 1:27; Titus 3:1–7; 2 Pet. 1:4).

c. Eternal (second) death

Eternal death is the separation of the individual from God eternally. This type of death is contrasted with eternal life. When Adam sinned, he was heading toward this "second death." He had to accept by faith God's offer of salvation in order to keep from dying eternally. All men born into this world are headed for eternal death. Only faith in Jesus Christ will keep them from dying eternally. The "second death" is the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14). It is separation from God eternally (Rom. 5:16–19; 6:23; 1 Tim. 2:5–6; 1 Pet. 1:18–19; Rev. 5:9; 21:8).

Physical death—annulled by the *resurrection*
Spiritual death—annulled by *regeneration*
Eternal death—*never* annulled for all eternity

B. Destiny

Although all people will live forever somewhere, the destinies of the lost and the saved will be quite different. In Scripture, the word "everlasting" or "eternal" denotes a **quality** of life as much as it does a **quantity** of life. The unsaved will live forever, but without "eternal" life.

> *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish [be separated from God], but have everlasting [a quality of life with God] life."* John 3:16

1. Destiny of the unsaved

The present destiny of the lost is Hell. Eventually and eternally it will be the Lake of Fire. The resurrected body of the unsaved will never burn up. It will be designed to exist forever. It appears the sinner will never become "accustomed" to the pain but "shall be **tormented** day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). In his lost condition the sinner may continue to sin in any way that he can for all eternity.

> *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."* Rev. 22:11

2. Destiny of the saved

The Christian receives a glorified body when he enters the Lord's presence. The old body of flesh returns to the dust (Gen. 3:19). The immaterial being of the saint will never cease to be conscious. "To be absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). It is a "refined" body that will rise to meet the Lord (1 Cor. 15:1–34; Rom. 8:11; Phil. 3:21).

In Heaven, the substance of the Christian's body will be changed, but his identity will be preserved. He will be raised a "spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44). His body will be so changed as to adapt comfortably to its new environment. It will not be susceptible to corruption or decay.

The Bible does not reveal a great deal about the condition of the glorified body. The body of Jesus Christ after His resurrection is the only Scriptural pattern that exists.

Pre-resurrected Christ—body comparable to Adam before the Fall

Post-resurrected Christ—body comparable to the Christian's glorified body

The Scripture does seem to suggest that the Christian's glorified body will possess the following characteristics:

a. Great mobility

Mark 9:8 indicates that Moses and Elijah in their glorified state were able to appear and disappear suddenly. Jesus, after His resurrection, was able to travel from one place to another very quickly (Luke 24). He was able to ascend into Heaven instantaneously (Acts 1:9–11). John 20:19, 26 also suggests that He had the power to pass through walls and doors at will. In Heaven the Christian may have that same ability.

b. Indefectibility

Since there will be no sin in Heaven, it is evident that God will design the saint so he will not be able to sin. This characteristic is called **indefectibility.**

> *"And there shall in no wise enter into it [Heaven] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."* Rev. 21:27

> Unfallen man was able not to sin.
> Fallen man is not able not to sin.
> Glorified man will not be able to sin.
> —*Augustine*

c. Human ability

Although the saint in Heaven will experience some wonderful changes, he will still be a human being. He will not become an angel. Nor will he become God. He will be like God in His moral attributes (love, holiness, righteousness, justice), but he will *never* be like God in His natural attributes (omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence). The saint will continue to learn for all eternity. He will *never* "know it all."

The believer will do many things that he did on earth in his natural body. It appears that he will eat. Christ ate on several occasions after His resurrection (Luke 24:30–31; John 21:12–14). Angels have the ability to eat (Gen. 18:1–8). All believers will attend the marriage supper of the Lamb in Heaven. In Heaven there will also be a "tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month" (Rev. 22:2). It would be unusual to have a tree like that in Heaven and not eat from it. It is unclear whether or not the saint will *need* to eat, but it seems obvious he *will* eat.

The average student has many questions about the abilities of the glorified body. The Bible reveals very little. The glorified body will not experience sorrow or pain (Rev. 21:4). Most believe that all scars will be removed in Heaven. Since the Millennium will not have disease nor deformity (Isa. 33:24; 35:1–7; Mic. 4:6–7), it would be reasonable to assume that Heaven would have no deformity either. The one example of a glorified body, Jesus Christ, however, *did have* His identifiable scars. But probably that is an exception to remind us of His sacrificial death for us as the Lamb of God.

The Christian will be "perfect" in his body, and each will still have his own identity.

There is much one cannot know about the future of the Christian, for God has not chosen to reveal a great wealth of information about such. The believer must simply trust in a God Who does all things well (Mark 7:37) and look forward to the day when many mysteries will be revealed in our heavenly home.

* * *

Lesson

49 The Reality of Hell

The doctrine of Hell is one of the most difficult doctrines for people to believe and understand. Neither man nor devil would have created such a doctrine, because it is abhorred by both (Matt. 8:29; James 2:19). Yet because the Bible teaches it, it is true and must be believed. Hell is a constant reminder that God is holy and just. The unsaved individual will go to Hell because he chooses to reject God's offer of salvation. The unsaved would be repulsed by a righteous life in Heaven. Milton in his classic work *Paradise Lost* recognized this sobering truth. He wrote that the Devil would rather rule in Hell than serve in Heaven. Hell may not be a popular subject, but it must be taught. The doctrine of Hell was taught more by Jesus Christ than by any other person. While on earth, Jesus taught more on the subject of Hell than he did on the subject of Heaven (Matt. 5:22–30; Luke 12:4–5; 16:19–31).

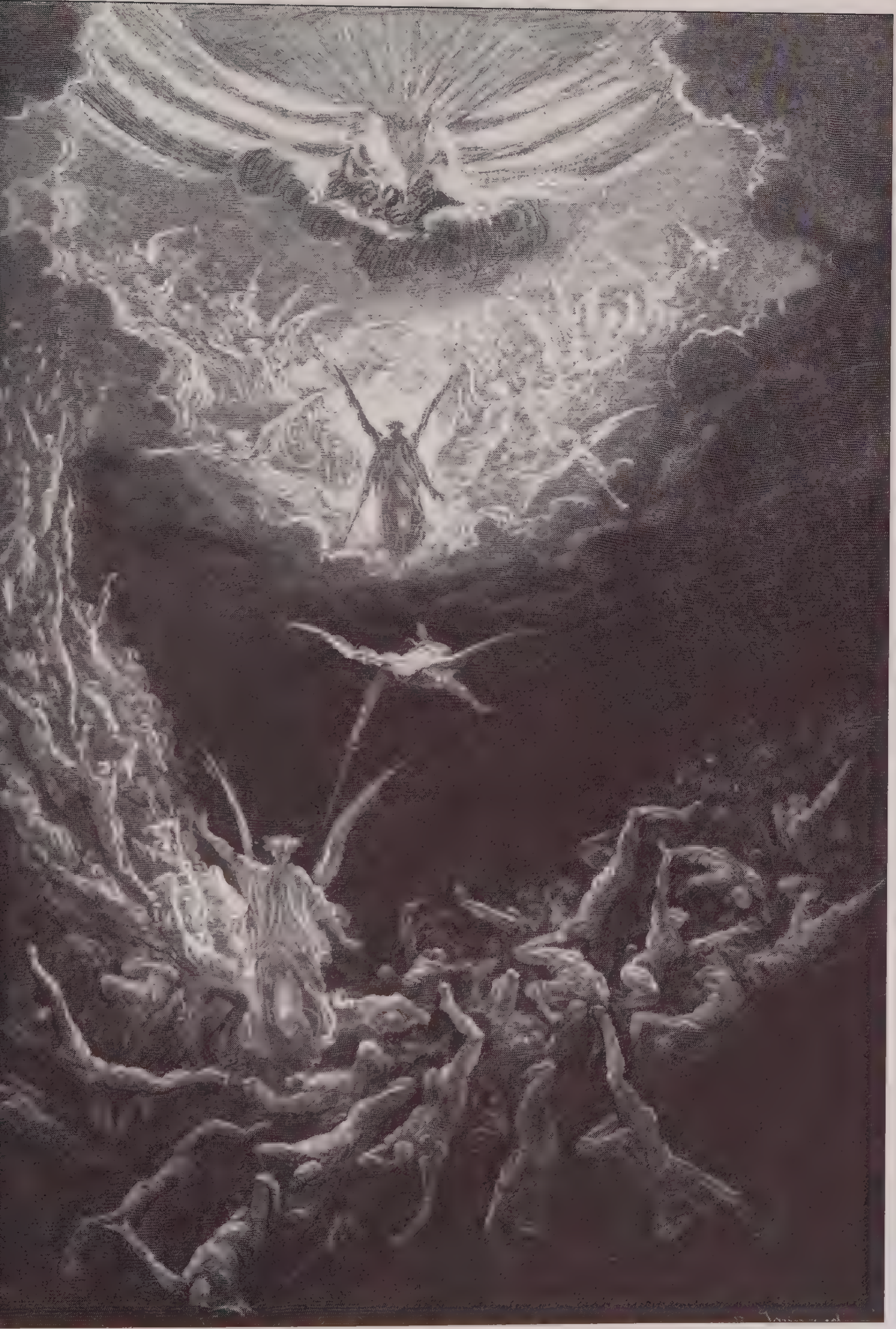
> "Fix your eye upon the very vilest sinner upon earth. Through death, this instant, pass him up to Heaven—with all his lusts, and lies, and hate, and devilish heart—can he be happy there? By the law of his nature, happiness lies in a correspondence between the mind and its subject. By another law of his nature, misery lies in the opposition between the mind and its object. This unholy heart feels, and must ever feel, the deepest aversion to everything that exists or transpires in holy Heaven." *—Joseph C. Stiles,*
> *Future Punishment* (St. Louis, MO: n.p., 1868), p. 4.

> "The Old Testament was in the hands of the Jews centuries before Christ came. They uniformly understood these Scriptures as teaching that the wicked are to suffer forever. . . . All the great church fathers, Reformers, and historical churches, with their recensions and translations of the Sacred Scriptures, their liturgies and hymns; all the great evangelical theologians and biblical scholars, with their grammars, dictionaries, commentaries and classical systems, have uniformly agreed in their understanding of the teaching of the Sacred Scriptures as to the endlessness of the future sufferings of all who die impenitent. And this has come to pass against the universal and impetuous current of human fears and sympathies."
> *—A. A. Hodge, Popular Lectures on Theological Themes*
> (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Pub., 1887), pp. 456–457.

A. Biblical terms describing the future of the dead

The stress of the Old Testament terminology is the future of the **body** at death. The body is silent (Eccles. 9:10) and has no knowledge (Eccles. 9:5–6, 10). Very little is taught in the Old Testament about the future destiny of the individual's soul. The saved will go to Heaven (2 Kings 2:11) and will be with God (Job 19:25–26).

It is not until one reads the New Testament that he gets a clear description of the doctrines of Hell and Heaven. There can be no doubt that Jesus Christ taught the reality of Hell and Heaven.



***The Last Judgment* by Gustave Doré**

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it. . . . And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." *Rev. 20:11–15*

1. The Hebrew word ***sheol*** (Job 17:13–16; Prov. 15:24; 23:14)

   The primary meaning of this word is "the present state of death," or "the grave."

   a. It is translated "pit" three times. (Num. 16:30, 33; Job 17:16)

      "They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit." Num. 16:33

      "They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust." Job 17:16

   b. It is translated "grave" thirty-one times. (Gen. 37:35; 1 Sam. 2:6; Job 7:9; Eccles. 9:10)

      "For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Gen. 37:35

      "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." 1 Sam. 2:6

   c. It is translated "Hell" thirty-one times. (Deut. 32:22; 2 Sam. 22:6; Job 11:8; Prov. 23:14)

      "The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me." 2 Sam. 22:6

      "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. Prov. 23:14

2. The Hebrew phrase ***valley of Hinnom*** (2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Jer. 7:31)

   This valley was an actual place near Jerusalem. It is believed that it was here that the heathen made their children "pass through the fire" to Baal and Molech. It is believed that Molech was a large, hollow, metallic statue of their god. The parents would build a fire inside the large idol, which was open in the back. A pit beneath the idol was also filled with fire. Once the metallic structure was very hot, the parents would place their small children on the outstretched arms of the figure and watch as the screaming children fell into the burning pit. The screams of the children were so agonizing that the people played instruments and mourned loudly in an attempt to drown out the cries of the children.

   The valley of Hinnom became a type (picture) of punishment and misery, because the bodies of dead animals and criminals were burned at its ever-burning fires. Isaiah refers to it as the kind of place to which the unsaved go at death:

   "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Isa. 66:24

3. The Greek word ***hades*** (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:27, 31)

   This word is the New Testament Greek translation of the Hebrew word *sheol*. Like *sheol*, this word stresses the future of the body. It is translated "Hell" ten times in the New Testament and translated "grave" once (1 Cor. 15:55).

4. The Greek word ***tartaros*** (2 Pet. 2:4)

   It is found only once in the New Testament and appears to mean "incarcerated in eternal torment."

5. The Greek word ***gehenna*** (Matt. 12:22–30)

   This word is the Greek translation of the Hebrew phrase *valley of Hinnom*. Like its counterpart, it emphasizes the future destiny of the unsaved. It denotes a place of **everlasting** torment (Matt. 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43–47; Luke 12:5). Jesus Christ mentions this word in every instance except one (James 3:6).

B. Biblical terms describing the future condition of the lost

1. The lost will be ***physically*** **tormented in Hell.**
   - **a.** torment (Matt. 8:29; Luke 16:23–25; Rev. 20:10)

     "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Rev. 20:10

   - **b.** fire (Mark 9:43–44; Luke 16:24; Rev. 20:15)

     "the lake of fire" Rev. 20:10

   - **c.** darkness (Matt. 8:12; Jude 13)

     "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" Jude 13

   - **d.** no rest (Isa. 57:20–21; Rev. 14:11)

     "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Rev. 14:11

   - **e.** brimstone (Rev. 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8)

     "These both [Antichrist and False Prophet] were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Rev. 19:20

   - **f.** thirst (Luke 16:24)

     "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Luke 16:24

2. The lost will be ***mentally*** **tormented in Hell.**
   - **a.** The memory of shunned salvation opportunities (Luke 16:25)
   - **b.** The hopelessness of their situation (Luke 16:26; Rev. 20:10)

3. The lost will be ***spiritually*** **tormented in Hell.**

   The greatest agony of the Lake of Fire may not be physical or mental. The unsaved will be in spiritual agony as he is separated from God forever and ever. There is a spiritual vacuum within every man which can be filled only by God's presence, but what an emptiness to be without God forever and without any hope of ever knowing Him!

Jesus Christ experienced that agony on the cross as He took the sins of mankind. A holy God had to turn His back on His only begotten Son. Jesus cried out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46) The greatest agony of Hell will be God's absence; the greatest joy of Heaven will be God's presence. Notice the contrast of these two verses:

> *"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation . . . In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."* 2 Thess. 1:6–9
>
> *"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."* Rev. 21:3

4. The lost will be ***justly*** **tormented in Hell.**

Throughout history God's punishments have always paralleled the crime. He has faithfully followed his "eye for an eye" philosophy. God has never punished anyone more than he deserved nor less than he deserved. If Hell seems more terrible than the sin, it is because of man's low estimate of God's justice, God's holiness, and God's view of sin.

> *"But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."* Rom. 7:13

a. God's judgment will be greater for some. (Luke 10:12–14; 11:31–32)

> *"The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."* Luke 11:32

OPPORTUNITY	RESPONSE	RESULT
Men of Nineveh heard **Jonah**	They repented	Less judgment
Men of Christ's day heard **Christ**	They repented not	Greater judgment because of better opportunity

b. God's judgment will be more tolerable for others. (Matt. 10:5; Matt. 11:20–24)

> *"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done*

in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Matt. 11:20–24

OPPORTUNITY	RESPONSE	RESULT
People of Tyre and Sidon saw **few of Christ's mighty works.** (Likewise, Sodom saw **few** of God's works.)	None	Judgment
People of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum saw **most of Christ's mighty works.**	None	Greater judgment because of better opportunity

c. God's judgment will be double for some. (Rev. 18:5–6)

"For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." Rev. 18:5–6

* * *

"If punishments of the wicked were chastisements, we should expect to see some bright outlook in the Bible-picture of the place of doom. A gleam of light, one might suppose, might make its way from the celestial city to this dark abode. The sufferers would catch some sweet refrain of heavenly music which would be a promise and prophecy of a far-off but coming glory. But there is a finality about the Scripture statements as to the condition of the lost, which is simply terrible." *—Francis L. Patton*

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16:26

"Seek ye the L*ORD* *while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the* L*ORD*, *and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."* Isa. 55:6–7

Lesson

50 The Reality of Heaven

Just as Hell is a reality for the unbeliever, so Heaven is the future reality for the Christian. This world is not the believer's home. "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14). Jesus Christ gave the promise to His children when He left this earth that someday He would return and take them to the place that He has prepared for them.

How does man know that he will live forever somewhere? It is logical as well as Scriptural.

> "Christ gave us proof of immortality, and yet it would hardly seem necessary that one should rise from the dead to convince us that the grave is not the end. If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and to make it burst forth into a new life, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rosebush whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He refuse the words of hope to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit like a royal guest to this tenement of clay? No, I am as sure that there is another life as I am that I live today!"
>
> —*William Jennings Bryan,*
> *Analogies of Nature*

A. Biblical definitions of the word *heaven*

The Bible uses the word *heaven* to designate three different locations. The specific meaning must be understood by the context. If this is not understood, the Biblical use of the word could be confusing.

1. The first "heaven" is the **atmosphere** above us.

   The Hebrew word for "heaven" and its Greek equivalent most often mean the atmosphere, the air that is breathed, the place where birds fly, and the place Satan is presently allowed to rule (Gen. 1:8; Exod. 20:11).

2. The second "heaven" is the **universe,** or outer space.

   The first verse of the Bible records God's creation of the universe, and Genesis 1:14 refers to "the heaven" as the place where the sun, moon, stars, and galaxies are located. The Bible uses the expression "as far as the east is from the west" to describe the limitlessness of the universe.

3. The third "heaven" is the place of **God's abode.**

   In the Old Testament this third "heaven" is often referred to as the "heaven of heavens" (Deut. 10:14; 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chron. 2:6; Neh. 9:6; and Ps. 148:4). Paul calls this third heaven *Paradise*

(2 Cor. 12:2–4); he had the privilege of seeing his future dwelling place, but he was totally unable to describe it in human language.

B. Biblical dimensions of Heaven

The new Jerusalem, which is the heavenly city described in Revelation 21:9–23, is the eternal dwelling place for all the saved of all the ages. It is described as being foursquare, that is, 12,000 furlongs long, 12,000 furlongs wide, and 12,000 furlongs high. Translated into our present dimensions, that would be almost 1,500 miles wide, 1,500 miles long, and 1,500 miles high. Some have also imagined it as perhaps a pyramid with God's throne at the pinnacle.

It is interesting to note that the entire city travels through space, for John saw it "coming down from God out of heaven"; it is indeed a space city (Rev. 21:2, 10).

Evidently the new Jerusalem is the place we call "Heaven." It is the "Father's house" (described in John 14:1–3) that Jesus is preparing for us. It will descend from above at the second coming of Christ and hover over earthly Jerusalem during the **Millennium.** From that vantage point the glorified saints will be able to rule with Christ for the thousand years. At the end of the Millennium, after the destruction of the earth, this same eternal city will move back to Heaven and continue to be the eternal habitation of the redeemed throughout eternity.

C. Biblical description of Heaven

God used normal human language when He wrote the Bible. As a result, Heaven cannot be fully described in detail, because no human words were available to do it justice. Paul realized this problem when he was caught up to the third heaven.

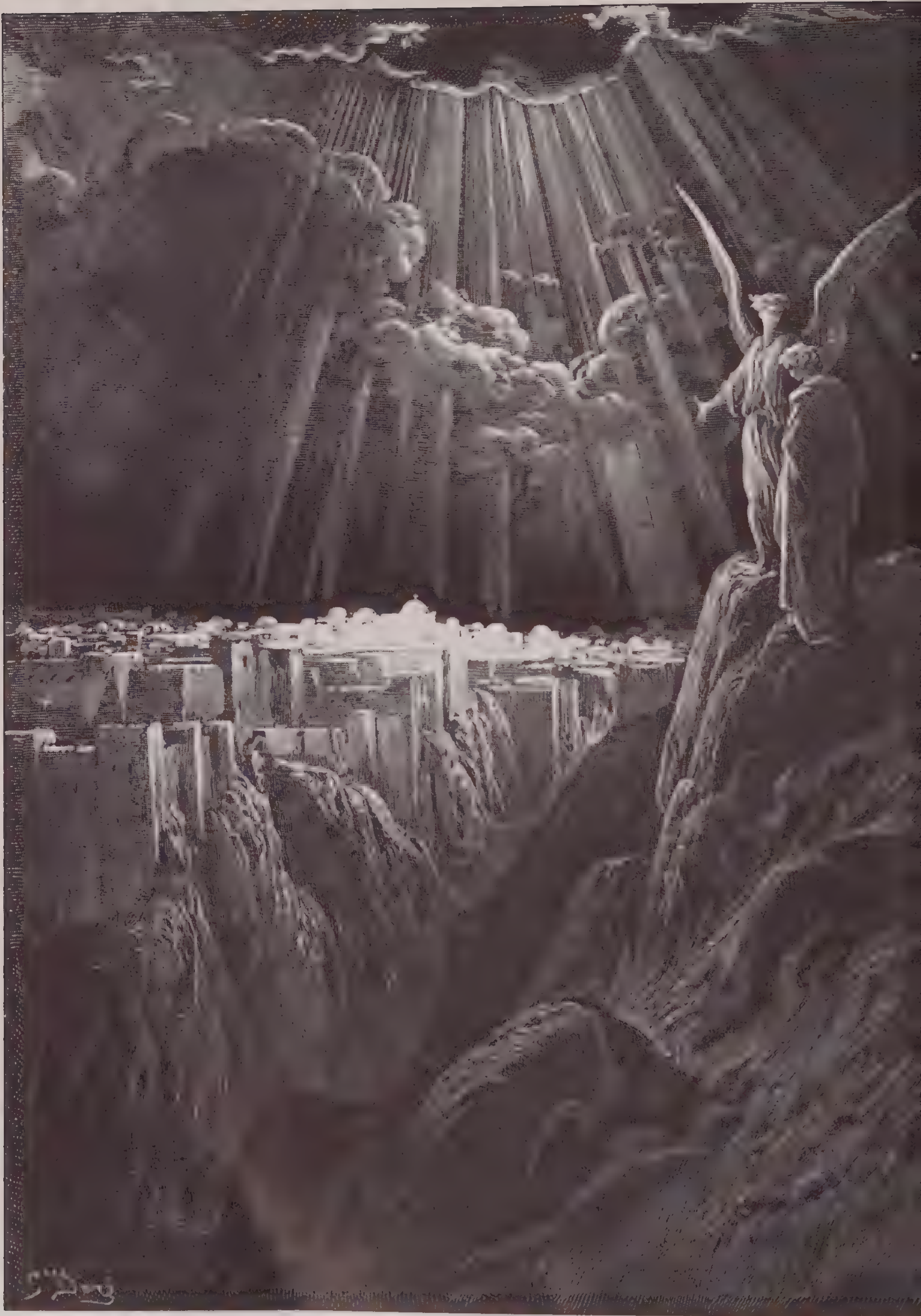
> *"How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful [possible] for a man to utter."* 2 Cor. 12:4

Describing all the glories of Heaven would be like attempting to describe the computer age with the language of the first century. Nevertheless, God gave us a beautiful description of some things that **will** be in heaven and several things that **will not** be there.

1. What **will** be in Heaven

> *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."* Rev. 21:2

God waited until the last book of the Bible to give us a glimpse of our future heavenly home. All who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior can look forward to the day when they will be in Heaven forever. What a glorious day that will be!



The New Jerusalem **by Gustave Doré**

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." *Rev. 21:10*

Ever since Jesus Christ left this earth, He has been preparing our heavenly mansions for us (John 14:1–3). In Revelation God records some of the qualities and ingredients of Heaven which will make it so special.

a. Exquisite beauty and priceless wealth

> *"Her [Heaven's] light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."* Rev. 21:11
>
> *"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."* Rev. 21:21

b. People and angels

> *"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God."* Rev. 19:1
>
> *"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts [living creatures] and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."* Rev. 5:11

One of the great joys of Heaven will be the reunion with loved ones we have known on this earth. Although death on earth brings sorrow, Paul reminds us that for the Christian we need not sorrow "as others which have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13). Although we sorrow for the Christian who has died, our future hope is in our heavenly reunion with him some day in the future. We will also meet many in Heaven we never knew in this life. We will meet many of those we read about in God's Word as well as all Christians of history. We will also associate eternally with the angels who have faithfully served the Lord since their creation.

c. The river of life and the tree of life

> *"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month."* Rev. 22:1–2

d. The Lamb's Book of Life

> *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* Rev. 20:15
>
> *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [the Antichrist], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb."* Rev. 13:8

The Book of Life contains the names of all who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior. It is God's record book of the redeemed.

e. God's presence

> *"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."* Rev. 21:3
>
> *"For in him [Jesus Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."* Col. 2:9

The greatest joy of Heaven is not in its beauty, its wealth, its angels, its river of life, its tree of life, its Book of Life, or even its reunion with family and friends. What will make Heaven truly glorious will be the presence of God Himself. For the first time we will see Jesus Christ, Who is the fullness of the Godhead (the Trinity) in bodily form. What a privilege it will be to come face to face with the One Who died for all mankind on Calvary!

2. What **will not** be in Heaven

a. No sorrow

> *"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."* Rev. 21:4

b. No death

> *"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."* Rev. 21:4

c. No boredom

> *"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."* Rev. 21:5

d. No thirst

> *"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."* Rev. 21:6

e. No limits (Read Rev. 21:10–21.)

f. No temple

> *"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."* Rev. 21:22

g. No sun or moon

> *"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it."* Rev. 21:23–24

h. No fear

> *"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day."* Rev. 21:25

i. No night

> *"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.* Rev. 21:25

What a contrast! In Hell it will be eternal night (Jude 6; Rev. 14:11); in Heaven it will be eternal day (Rev. 21:23–25)!

j. No sin

> *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."* Rev. 21:27

Twice in the passage (Rev. 21:8 and 21:27) God reminds us that Heaven will be glorious because no sin will be found there.

k. No impurity

> *"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."* Rev. 22:1

l. No scarcity

> *"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month."* Rev. 22:2

The tree will supply enough fruit for all of Heaven. The believer will not lack anything in Heaven.

m. No ill health

> *"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing [health] of the nations."* Rev. 22:2

n. No curse

> *"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him."* Rev. 22:3

o. No laziness (Rev. 22:3–5)

The idea that the believer in Heaven will sit on a cloud and play a harp is contrary to the Scripture.

> *"And his servants shall serve him."* Rev. 22:3

> *"And they shall reign for ever and ever."* Rev. 22:5

The believer will work in Heaven, but it will be enjoyable work. The curse will be gone, and labor will be a pleasure. Perhaps each will be able to do things he never had the chance to do in this life. It will be work without pain or sorrow. The One Whom the Christian serves will make all the difference. What a privilege it will be to serve the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

> *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* John 14:1–3

> *"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* Rev. 22:20

What Are They Now Doing in Heaven?

T. DeWitt Talmage, 1832-1902

(Excerpts from his famous sermon)

The question is often silently asked, though perhaps never audibly propounded, "What are our departed Christian friends doing now?" The question is more easily answered than you might suppose.

In heaven we will be just as different from each other as we are now different, and hence there will be at least as many different employments in the celestial world as there are employments here. Christ is to be the great love, the great joy, the great rapture, the great worship of heaven; but will that abolish employment? No more than loves on earth—paternal, filial, fraternal, conjugal love—abolish earthly occupation.

In the first place, I remark that all those of our departed Christian friends who on earth found great joy in the fine arts are now indulging their tastes in the same direction. On earth they had their gladdest pleasures amid pictures and statuary, and in the study of the laws of light and shade and perspective. Have you any idea that that affluence of faculty at death collapsed and perished? Why so, when there is more for them to look at, and they have keener appreciation of the beautiful, and they stand amid the very looms where the sunsets and the rainbows and the spring mornings are woven?

I remark again that all our departed Christian friends who in this world were passionately fond of music are still regaling that taste in the world celestial. The Bible says so much about the music of heaven that it cannot all be figurative. The Bible over and over again speaks of the songs of heaven. If heaven had no songs of its own, a vast number of those of earth would have been taken up by the earthly emigrants.

Music was born in heaven, and it will ever have its highest throne in heaven; and I want you to understand that our departed friends who were passionately fond of music here, are now at the headquarters of harmony. I think that the grand old tunes that died when your grandfathers died, have gone with them to heaven. When those tunes died, they did not stay on earth, and they could not have been banished to perdition, and so I think they must be in the corridors of alabaster and Lebanon cedar.

But what are our mathematical friends to do in the next world? They found their joy and their delight in mathematics. They are busy with figures yet. No place in all the universe like heaven for figures. Numbers infinite, distances infinite, calculations infinite.

So of our transferred and transported metaphysicians. What are they doing now? Studying the human mind, only under better circumstances than they used to study it. They used to study the mind sheathed in the dull human body. Now the spirit is unsheathed—now they are studying the sword outside the scabbard.

What are our departed Christian friends who are explorers doing now? Exploring yet, but with lightning locomotion, with vision microscopic and telescopic at the same time. A continent at a glance. A world in a second. A planetary system in a day.

What are our departed friends who found their chief joy in study doing now? Studying yet, but instead of a few thousand volumes on a few shelves, all the volumes of the universe open before them.

What are the historians doing now? Studying history yet, but not the history of a few centuries of our planet only, but the history of the eternities.

What are our departed astronomers doing? Studying astronomy yet, but not through the dull lens of earthly observatory, but with one stroke of wing going right out to Jupiter and Mars and Mercury and Saturn and Orion and the Pleiades—overtaking and passing swiftest comet in their flight.

What are our departed Christian chemists doing? Following out their own science, following out and following out forever. Since they died they have solved ten thousand questions which once puzzled the earthly laboratory.

But what are the men of the law, who in this world found their chief joy in the legal profession—what are they doing now? Studying law in a universe where everything is controlled by law, from flight of hummingbird to flight of world—law, not dry and hard and drudging, but righteous and magnificent law, before which man and cherub and seraph and archangel bow.

But what are our friends who found their chief joy in conversation and in sociality doing now? In brighter conversation there and in grander sociality. What a place to visit in, where your next-door neighbors are kings and queens. You yourselves kingly and queenly. If they want to know more particularly about the first Paradise, they have only to go over and ask Adam. If they want to know how the sun and the moon halted, they have only to go over and ask Joshua. If they want to know how the storm pelted Sodom they have only to go over and ask Lot. If they want to know more about the arrogance of Haman, they have only to go over and ask Mordecai. If they want to know how the Red Sea boiled when it was cloven, they have only to go over and ask Moses. If they want to know the particulars about the Bethlehem advent, they have only to go over and ask the serenading angels who stood that Christmas night in the balconies of crystal. If they want to know more of the particulars of the crucifixion, they have only to go over and ask those who were personal spectators while the mountains crouched and the heavens got black in the face at the spectacle. O! what a place to visit in. If eternity were one minute shorter it would not be long enough for such sociality.

What are our departed Christian friends, who found their chief joy in studying God, doing now? Studying God yet! No need of revelation now, for unblanched they are face to face. Now they can handle the omnipotent thunderbolts just as a child handles the sword of a father come back from victorious battle. They have no sin, nor fear, consequently. Studying Christ, not through a revelation, save the revelation of the scars, that deep lettering which brings it all up quick enough. Studying the Christ of the Bethlehem caravansary, the Christ of the awful massacre with its hemorrhage of head and hand, and foot and side—the Christ of the shattered mausoleum—Christ the sacrifice, the star, the sun, the man, the God.

But hark! the bell of the cathedral rings—the cathedral bell of heaven.

What is the matter now? There is going to be a great meeting in the temple. Worshipers all coming through the aisles. Make room for the Conqueror. Christ standing in the temple. All heaven gathering around him. Those who loved the beautiful, come to look at the Rose of Sharon. Those who loved music, come to listen to his voice. Those who were mathematicians, come to count the years of his reign. Those who were explorers, come to discover the breadth of his love. Those who had the military spirit on earth sanctified, and the military spirit in heaven, come to look at the Captain of their salvation. The astronomers come to look at the Morning Star. The men of the law come to look at him who is the judge of quick and dead. The men who healed the sick, come to look at him who was wounded for our transgressions. All different, and different forever in many respects, yet all alike in admiration for Christ, in worship of Christ, and all alike in joining in the doxology: "Unto him who washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God, to him be glory in the church throughout all ages, world without end!" Amen.

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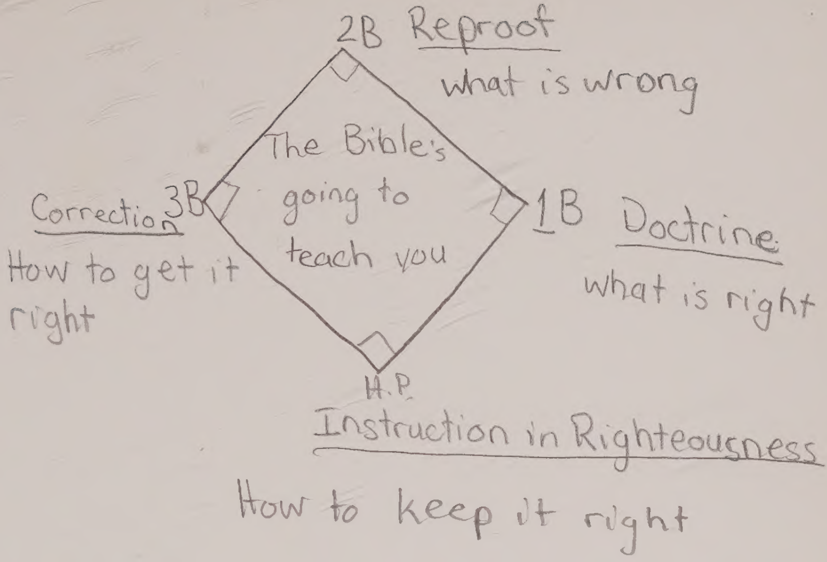
Is it authoritive? (Thus sayeth the Lord)

Does it have apostolic authority?

Does it agree with God's truth?

Does it have ability to change lives?

Were they accepted by other Christians?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